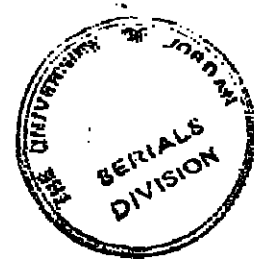


Prominent Catholic killed in Irish Republic

DUBLIN (R) — Masked gunmen shot dead a prominent Catholic politician in the Irish Republic on Saturday after holding a family hostage in their home while they planned the killing, police said. Eddie Fullerton, a council member of Sinn Féin, the political wing of the Irish Republican Army (IRA), was shot on the stairs of his home in Buncrana, County Donegal, 16 kilometres from the border with Northern Ireland. Irish police said four men used a neighbour's house to plan the attack before smashing into Fullerton's home with sledgehammers. The neighbour's family was unhurt. Fullerton, 56, was married with five children. No group has claimed responsibility for the shooting. An Irish police spokesman said the attack bore the hallmarks of Protestant paramilitaries in Northern Ireland and could signal the end of a ceasefire they had declared to coincide with landmark talks about the future of the battle-scarred province. "There is a suspicion it was (loyalist paramilitaries) but we cannot substantiate that," the spokesman said. Loyalists said when they announced their ceasefire they reserved the right to carry out "defensive and retaliatory action" against attacks by the IRA, which is fighting to end British rule in Northern Ireland.



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King attends reception

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Saturday attended a reception hosted by Prime Minister Mudar Badran on the occasion of the Kingdom's Independence Day at the Prime Ministry. King Hussein received congratulations at the ceremony from the ministers, the speaker and members of the Upper House of Parliament, the deputy speaker and members of the Lower House of Parliament, the Jordanian Armed Forces chief of staff and senior officers, representatives of political, cultural, economic and social institutions, the heads of municipalities and local councils as well as members of the diplomatic corps in Jordan.

U.S. cautious on Syrian-Lebanese pact

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. State Department reserved judgment Friday on a treaty that establishes a special relationship between Syria and Lebanon. "The judgment will depend partly on whether the treaty signed in Damascus on Wednesday supports Lebanon's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity," spokeswoman Margaret D. Tutwiler said. "It's my understanding that Lebanon and Syria have been working on such a type of agreement, I believe, for six or seven years. It is my understanding that out of a cabinet that I believe consists of 30 individuals in Lebanon, 28 supported this," she said. The treaty was signed by Syrian President Hafez Assad and Lebanese President Elias Hrawi, whose government is backed by Syria. It provides for the creation of joint government institutions for cooperation in defence, security, foreign policy and the economy.

Recipient of first portable heart dies

HOUSTON (AP) — A 52-year-old man who was the first recipient of a portable heart pump has died, a hospital said Saturday. Larry Heinsohn, of Shreveport, Louisiana, died Thursday of multiple organ failure, including his liver and kidneys, said Texas Heart Institute spokesman Marc Mattsson. "The doctor had said throughout that he had so many other problems, he was a very sick man," Mattsson said. The heart pump, a device connected to a battery pack that can be slung over the shoulder, was implanted May 9. It is designed to keep patients alive and mobile while they wait for a heart transplant. Heinsohn had been suffering from cardiomyopathy, a degenerative disease of the heart, and would have died immediately without the device, the institute said after the operation, the first of its kind.

2,000 rally in London for the whales

LONDON (R) — About 2,000 animal lovers opposed to whale hunting staged a rally in London on Saturday, two days before talks which could end a worldwide ban on commercial whaling. "The killing of these beautiful creatures, who suffer long lingering deaths at the hands of mankind, must stop," British actress Rula Lenska told the Trafalgar Square rally.

Radicals support Rafsanjani

NICOSIA, Cyprus (AP) — Islamic theologians in Qom, a traditional stronghold of hardliners opposed to Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani, rallied behind the president Saturday after he warned he would not allow his economic plans to be sabotaged. Tehran radio, monitored in Nicosia, said that scholars at the Qom seminary sent a letter to Rafsanjani describing Iran as a "ship in rough seas," which "badly needs a helmsman like your eminence." Rafsanjani was assured that "the community of scholars at the Qom seminary... will never allow the undermining and destruction of your plans." The report did not specify how many scholars joined in sending the letter. Anti-Western radicals have opposed the government's plans to seek foreign loans and investments to revitalize the sluggish economy.

Security Council deplores Israel for expelling Palestinians, demands their return

UNITED NATIONS (R) — The Security Council, with United States support, unanimously deplored on Friday Israel's expulsion of Palestinians from the occupied territories and demands their immediate safe return.

Israel claimed the deportees were senior activists in the Palestine Liberation Organisation's mainline Fatah movement who had been imprisoned a number of times for acts of violence and that two were convicted killers.

The PLO said the resolution should serve as a prelude to the consideration of the question of Israeli settlements in occupied territories.

U.S. backing for the resolution follows sharp criticism earlier this week by Secretary of State James Baker, endorsed by President George Bush, of Israeli settlements in the territories captured in the 1967 Middle East war.

The United States voted for several resolutions critical of Israel last October and in January, when it was anxious not to upset the Arab members of the

coalition that drove Iraqi troops out of Kuwait.

The latest resolution declares the expulsions to be in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention on the treatment of civilians in time of war and detrimental to Middle East peace efforts.

The deportations brought to 66 the number of Palestinians banished by Israel since the start of an uprising in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip in December 1987.

The deported Palestinians were flown by helicopter to Israel's self-declared security zone in southern Lebanon last Saturday after the Israeli supreme court denied appeals against their expulsion.

The resolution "deplores this action and reiterates that Israel... refrain from deporting any Palestinian civilian from the occupied territories and ensure the safe and immediate return of all those deported."

The latest U.S. vote continues a trend of supporting — or not vetoing — anti-Israel resolutions

that Washington followed during the Gulf war.

Israel's unhappiness at the latest U.S. vote might be mitigated by gratitude for Washington's help in organising an emergency airlift, now completed, of thousands of Ethiopian Jews to Israel from rebel-encircled Addis Ababa.

But the resolution is bound to strengthen Israel's opposition to any role for the United Nations in a Middle East peace conference that Baker has been trying to arrange during four recent visits to the region.

The Security Council issued a statement on March 27, soon after the expulsion orders were first issued, deploring Israel's decision and expressing serious concern about the situation in the Israeli-occupied territories.

The PLO's deputy representative, Riyad Mansour, told the council that if it was unable to compel Israel to implement its resolutions, how would it convince anyone that it could compel Israel "to withdraw from our occupied land at a later stage."

He said the resolution should serve as a preamble for consideration of the question of settlements.

"Settlements must be stopped through eliminating settlements and withdrawing settlers with the occupation when it leaves our occupied land," Mansour added.

Israeli ambassador Yoram Aridor said the four deportees had all been jailed for long terms for throwing hand grenades or planting bombs and that two of them were convicted killers, including one who strangled a fellow Arab prisoner and pried his eyes out with a kitchen spoon.

"The disproportion evident in the obsession with Israel not only threatens the work of this organisation. It undermines its very basis," Aridor said.

American representative Thomas Pickering said Washington had a long-standing policy of opposing deportations and called on Israel to desist.

"This is the moment for Israel to change its policy on deportations," he said, referring to efforts to bring about negotia-

tions between Israel, Arab states and Palestinians.

"Even as the United States voted in favour of this resolution today, our sights were focused on the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the region," he added.

The resolution's preamble says the council learned of the expulsions "with deep concern and consternation." It says Israel acted "in opposition to relevant Security Council resolutions, and to the detriment of efforts to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East."

The meeting had been requested by the council's seven non-aligned members — Cuba, Ecuador, India, Ivory Coast, Yemen, Zaire and Zimbabwe — who circulated a resolution somewhat tougher than the one finally adopted.

The United States proposed an alternative draft and a compromise was worked out during private negotiations (see text of resolution on page 2 and related story on page 3).

Nakayama heads for Mideast

TOKYO (AP) — Foreign Minister Taro Nakayama left Saturday for three Middle East countries — Iran, Egypt and Israel — and visits to Bonn, Paris, Geneva and Luxembourg.

Foreign ministry officials said Nakayama will visit the Middle East from May 27 to June 1 after meeting Sunday with German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher in Bonn.

In the Middle East, Nakayama will meet with leaders of Iran, Egypt and Israel to explore ways Japan can contribute to the region and help seek peace and stability there after the Gulf crisis, they said.

In Iran, Nakayama will visit Kurdish refugee camps, and in Israel, he will meet with Palestinian leaders in the occupied territories, the ministry said.

Japan, a major donor to the

U.S.-led forces during the Gulf crisis, has since said it will participate actively in international efforts to promote an effective peace process in the Middle East.

Early this year, Japan also said it will seek warmer relations with Israel, Japan, which imports 70 per cent of its oil from the Middle East, has favoured Arab countries for decades.

In Europe, Nakayama is scheduled to attend ministerial meetings of the International Energy Agency in Paris on June 3, a meeting of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development in Paris on June 4-5, a disarmament conference in Geneva on June 6, and a foreign ministerial meeting with the European Community in Luxembourg on June 7.

Nakayama is to return home June 8.

Kurds return to Dohuk

DOHUK, Iraq (R) — Rag-tag refugees returned in their thousands to the northern Iraqi city of Dohuk on Saturday after U.S.-led forces moved in to reassure the Kurds it was safe to go back to the homes they fled in panic two months ago.

Refugees rode in dozens of hired Iraqi trucks in a ragged procession along the main highway into Dohuk from the mountainous Turkish border 75 kilometres to the north.

"This is a real breakthrough. It's a great day," said Staffan de Mistura, head of the United Nations relief operation for the Kurds.

The Geneva headquarters of the United High Commissioner for Refugees said earlier that only about 123,000 of the half million Kurds who fled to the Turkish border were still there — most were from Dohuk.

More than 1.3 million other Kurdish refugees are still in camps in Iran.

"If the shuttles continue like this, I expect there will be no more Kurdish refugees (in the coalition security zone) in a week to ten days," de Mistura told reporters.

Over 90 per cent of Dohuk's 150,000 people fled during the uprising against Baghdad after its defeat by the U.S.-led multinational forces in the Gulf war.

Coalition troops occupied Iraq's northern fringe in April to shield the refugee Kurds from the Iraqi army.

Encouraged by allied guarantees, most Kurds from the Turkish frontier have since returned home except for those from Dohuk who held out until the coalition stretched its security zone south to the provincial capital on Friday.

With the grudging assent of Baghdad, a small advance party had entered Dohuk that day in a 40-truck convoy on Saturday.

They will stay for three weeks, running refugee reception centres, clearing Dohuk of war rubble and unexploded ammunition and restoring essential electricity, water, sanitation and medical services.

Heavily-armed Iraqi troops and security police withdrew to about 20 kilometres south of the city a few days ago to pave the way for the allied entry and reassure the refugees.

Word of the Iraqi-coalition pact brought a steady trickle of refugees into Dohuk in the last few days, reviving what had been a ghost town. But large numbers began streaming in only in the past 24 hours.

Raymond Naimy, UNICEF coordinator in the security haven said about half of Dohuk's people had returned.

"We have sixty trucks with a capacity of 30 refugees each available to shuttle back and forth all day," he said in Zakho, the Iraqi border town where coalition forces are based.

In Dohuk, U.N. security guards drove around in white jeeps. The 10 guards are assigned to the city with Baghdad's approval and are the vanguard of up to 500 U.N. security men to be spread through Iraq to build confidence.

Coalition forces hope to leave Dohuk as soon as the situation is normal but some Kurds want the allies to stay.

Allied military sources report pressure from Kurdish Peshmerga guerrillas to stay as leverage for their autonomy negotiations with Baghdad. Kurds interviewed in Dohuk said they wanted an indefinite allied presence.

"With the allies here, we feel safe in our homes again and that is a basic human right," said student Dildar Hamed.

Kurdish leaders negotiating with Baghdad have expressed satisfaction at the progress of autonomy talks.

Israel ends airlift of 15,000 Ethiopian Jews

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia (AP) — Israel on Saturday said it had completed a massive airlift of Ethiopian Jews from this besieged city, transporting 15,000 Jews in a round-the-clock operation.

Virtually all of those who departed took only the clothes they were wearing.

Most were peasant farmers from the northwestern province of Gondar.

Authorities screening those seeking to emigrate rejected about 3,000 people, but it was not immediately known why. Forty-seven others missed the flights because they arrived too late.

The airlift, which began Friday morning, was sparked by fears of civil disorder in Addis Ababa as anti-government rebels reached the outskirts of the capital.

Four Hercules C-130 cargo planes shuttled back and forth between Israel and this Horn of African nation throughout the day and night carrying as many as 1,200 people per flight.

During the operation, thousands of Jews hoping to emigrate gathered outside the Israeli embassy in the capital city while hundreds more crowded the grounds inside supervised by Israeli security men in civilian clothes.

The United States worked out

an agreement with the Ethiopian government and the rebels to get final approval for the airlift, but U.S. officials in Washington said the exodus was largely the result of an agreement between Israel and Ethiopia.

Israel, which had supported former President Mengistu Haile Mariam against the rebels, had been preparing for a possible airlift of the Jews for several weeks as guerrillas tightened their grip around the capital.

Fears of chaos in the capital plus concerns that the rebels might not allow an exodus of Ethiopian Jews led Israel begin the massive airlift.

One of the rebel groups, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front, is largely Muslim and has received support from various Arab governments during its 16 year struggle against the Ethiopian government.

Several thousand Ethiopian Jews had been allowed to emigrate following the re-establishment of diplomatic ties in 1989 between Israel and Ethiopia after a 16-year break.

But the emigration was in a stop-and-go fashion while Mengistu tried to get Israel to supply him with weapons against the insurgents.

Mengistu, who resigned and

fled Tuesday, had used the Jews as leverage, letting them out a bit at a time and periodically closing off the flow to press for more Israeli military aid.

Seven years ago, Israel first tried to airlift all of Ethiopia's Jews to save them from a severe drought and famine that eventually killed about 1 million people.

The United States was instrumental in the airlift, U.S. officials said.

But the U.S. government told the Israeli government not to settle the immigrants in the occupied territories.

"We understand that the Ethiopian decision to allow the Falashas (Ethiopian Jews) to depart the country was taken in response to a letter from President Bush on May 22" to acting Ethiopian President Tesfaye Gebre Kidan, said White House spokesman Martin Fitzwater.

Tesfaye, formerly vice president, has been running Ethiopia since President Mariam fled the country earlier this week.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir called Bush as the U.S. president was aboard air force one en route to Boston Friday morning. "to thank him for the American role in the release," of the Ethiopian Jews, Fitzwater said.

Ethiopian prime minister heads for London peace talks; Asmara falls to Eritrean rebels

ADDIS ABABA (Agencies) — The evacuation, cloaked in secrecy, began on Friday and was completed Saturday.

Tesfaye Dinka, leading an 11-man delegation to Monday's U.S.-brokered talks in London, said that after a ceasefire was agreed the talks would centre on negotiations for a transitional government in which all the country's political parties and rebel groups would be represented.

"Our first and foremost aim is to set up a transitional government which will prepare the way for multi-partyism, elections, and real democracy," he said.

Tesfaye Dinka said he was going to the talks with an open mind and that everything was up for discussion.

"We have no blue-print, no agenda," he said.

But Tesfaye Dinka — a former foreign minister named premier last month by the now exiled strong-arm leader Mengistu Haile Mariam — warned that if rebels insisted on pushing on and trying to take Addis Ababa that they would meet with stiff resistance.

Rebels of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), whose spectacu-

lar successes in recent months forced Mengistu's flight into exile on Tuesday, have given assurances they will avoid a bloodbath in the city.

Mengistu's abrupt exit removed a major stumbling block at the talks. But both the EPRDF and its ally the EPLF have rejected truce calls by the new leadership, led by acting President Tesfaye Gabre Kidan.

Tesfaye Dinka said ordinary citizens would fight alongside military units to repel a rebel advance on the capital.

"I would like to underline here that we want to avoid confrontation," he said. "We hope that a situation in which we would fight will not develop, but if it is forced upon us we shall defend ourselves."

Confirming the EPLF's claim to have captured Asmara, Tesfaye Dinka said the city was taken by the rebels in an orderly fashion on Friday night.

He said they entered without violence after the military commander of government troops there fled the city following 48 hours of heavy fighting on the outskirts.

Ecevit interviews Iraqi president

BAGHDAD (R) — Former Turkish Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit, on a visit to Baghdad, met Iraqi President Saddam Hussein on Saturday, the Iraqi News Agency (INA) said. Ecevit, leader of the Social Democratic Party who arrived in Baghdad on Wednesday at the invitation of the Iraqi government, interviewed President Saddam Hussein for the Turkish newspaper Milliyet in the run-up to the six week Gulf war. INA said Ecevit was accompanied on his latest trip by Dirya Sazak, news director of the Turkish newspaper Milliyet. It gave no details about the discussions which were attended by Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz and former Information Minister Latif Nussayf Jassem, now in charge of the ruling Baath Party's foreign relations. Turkey supported the U.S.-led alliance against Iraq during the Gulf war and enforced U.N. sanctions imposed on Baghdad after its invasion of Kuwait last August.

More 'collaborators' tried in Kuwait

KUWAIT (R) — A Kuwaiti wept in court on Saturday when he was accused of stealing food during Iraq's occupation of the emirate.

"I had no money to feed my children. I went to the mosque and asked the imam if it was all right to take food that did not belong to me for my children. He said it was," Yousef Mohammad said.

He was one of 25 people to appear in a martial-law court on Saturday on a variety of charges linked to Iraq's seven-month occupation of Kuwait. It was the third in a series of trials involving 200 suspected collaborators.

The names of 41 people were on a charge sheet read out at the court in the palace of justice. They comprised one Kuwaiti, 19 Jordanians, one Saudi, one Turk, six stateless residents of Kuwait, and 10 Iraqis.

Only 25 defendants were present. The remainder will appear at a later session, court officials said. Those who appeared, including a woman in a black chador who was believed to be an Iraqi, pleaded not guilty to a variety of collaboration charges.

The United States has expressed concern about the way that defence lawyers have been prevented from having contact with their clients before the trials, which started a week ago.

Defence lawyers have also complained about mistreatment of prisoners and one of Saturday's defendants, Jordanian Morthada Ibrahim, alleged that he had been beaten while in custody and forced to drink blood.

One of the judges on the five-man panel of civilians and soldiers ordered that he be examined.

Kuwaiti Yousef Mohammad was highly emotional in admitting that he stole food during the occupation. But a judge said the police accused him of also stealing a car and a refrigerator.

"I needed the car because the Iraqis took three of my cars away from me," he told the court.

The trial continues.

Pravda warns West if it did not help

MOSCOW (R) — The Communist Party daily Pravda bluntly warned the West on Saturday it would suffer greatly unless it helped the Soviet Union avert economic disaster.

Pravda said Western reluctance to help economic recovery in the Soviet Union could plunge the world back into the dark days of the cold war.

Although the Soviet Union would survive the current crisis, much depended on the price it people and the rest of the world had to pay, the newspaper said in a commentary written by Tomas Kolesnichenko.

"If we have to pay an immeasurable price, if in the near future we become mired in chaos and misery, neither Europe nor the United States will remain 'purer than pearl.' They will have no sense of peaceful well-being," Kolesnichenko said.

Therefore it is in the interests of the West (and I mean it of their interests, not out of any love for us) to help our country overcome this difficult time with minimum losses."

The Soviet economy is slumping fast, hit by falling production, a crippling eight-week miners' strike recently and the rupture of traditional economic ties as the republics press for more autonomy from the Kremlin.

Foreign experts estimate the economy needs aid worth around \$100 billion to recover, but Western investors are unwilling to pledge that amount until they see sign of economic reforms taking effect.

The Soviet government is trying to gradually transfer the economy onto market-based principles but results so far have

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued on page 5)

OIC delegation meets Somali leaders

NICOSIA (R) — A delegation from the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), headed by its Secretary-General Hamid Al Ghabid, visited northern Somalia to urge breakaway regional leaders to preserve the country's unity.

Northern Somali separatists declared independence for their region last Saturday.

The Somali National Movement (SNM) declared their leader Abdullahi Ahmed Ali president of the new Somaliland republic, reinstating the old colonial border which once separated the British protectorate in the north from Italian Somaliland.

Al Ghabid, heading a delegation of Islamic Financial and Relief Agency officials, met Ali in Ber-

bera on the north coast Friday.

A statement received in Nicosia from OIC headquarters in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, described the discussion as frank.

"The secretary-general reaffirmed the great importance... attached to the preservation of the unity and territorial integrity of Somalia," it said.

Ali stressed the need for immediate famine aid to all regions of Somalia, the statement said. Some 500,000 Somali refugees had begun to return from Ethiopia, increasing the pressing need for food, medicine and tents.

"On the political level, the chairman of the Somali National Movement stated that his move-

ment is in contact with the leaders in the south in Mogadishu with a view to finding a formula of understanding between the two parties.

The United Somali Congress (USC), another of three major clan-based armed factions in Somalia, has installed an interim government in the capital after ousting former President Mohammad Siad Barre in late January.

Neither group recognises the legitimacy of the other. Al Ghabid earlier held talks in Djibouti with Omar Arteh Ghabib, prime minister of the interim government in Mogadishu, the OIC statement said.



Esnat Abdul Meguid

Meguid in Libya

NICOSIA (R) — The Arab League's new Secretary-General Esnat Abdul Meguid has arrived in Libya to attend an Arab Parliamentary Union (APU) conference. His first trip abroad since he was elected to the post this month.

The Libyan news agency JANA, monitored in Nicosia, quoted Abdul Meguid as saying on arrival in Tripoli on Friday night he would continue efforts to "clear the Arab atmosphere" in cooperation with Libya.

The League's 20 members were divided following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait last August. Some sympathised with Baghdad by opposing foreign military intervention in the Gulf crisis while others backed Kuwait by sending troops to join a U.S.-led multinational force which drove Iraq out of the emirate.

JANA said that at a meeting with Libya's foreign Minister Ibrahim Al Beshari shortly after arrival, Abdul Meguid "praised the jamahiriya's backing that led to his election" as league secretary-general.

He quoted Abdul Meguid as saying a committee on amending the league's charter would be reactivated and its priorities would include a draft Libyan plan for Arab unity.

Libya's leader Muammar Gaddafi has long advocated unity. Libya's leader Muammar Gaddafi has long advocated unity among the Arab states. The latest move in this direction was a political integration accord signed with Sudan Wednesday as a step towards a merger planned by 1994.

Muslim activist strike call widely ignored in Algeria

ALGIERS (R) — Islamic fundamentalists challenged Algeria's election plans with a general strike call Saturday but industrial managers and trade unions opposing the walkout said it was widely ignored.

Petroleum installations in Skikda, Oran and the Sahara were working normally, according to management and union leaders allied to the ruling National Liberation Front (FLN).

So were major industrial plants at Annaba and Al Hadjar in the east and a vehicle assembly line south of Algiers, they said. Several hundred supporters of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), dressed in white, squatted at street corners in the capital to read the Koran and chant anti-government slogans.

But schools, universities, post offices, shops and sidewalk cafes were open. Traffic and public transport ran normally.

Algeria's first multi-party legislative elections are set for June 27. The FIS, a major contender, says the rules have been rigged in the government's favour.

It wants the new electoral code scrapped, a presidential election held instead and an independent

commission appointed to supervise the vote.

FIS president Abassi Madani says the strike will last until the government agrees.

President Chadli Bejaïd, architect of a political and economic liberation programme after 29 years of one-party socialist rule, was elected in 1988 for five years. He has ignored FIS demands for an early presidential election.

The FIS won a majority of seats in local government elections a year ago to emerge as the largest of over 40 opposition parties legalised since President Chadli introduced reforms.

Other opposition parties have also criticised the new electoral laws saying they favour FLN candidates.

In a statement Friday night, the interior ministry said the strike call was illegal and risked disturbing the peace.

"The avowed aim of this adventurous action is to destabilise the democratic movement and the citizens' exercise of free choice, by means of an illegal political strike a month before free elections," the statement said.

Velayati blames U.S. for Gulf incident

NICOSIA, Cyprus (AP) — Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati has blamed the United States for the incident earlier this week in which an American warship exchanged fire with an Iranian speedboat in the central Gulf, the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) reported Saturday.

The incident, the first of its kind since the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war, occurred Tuesday. It involved the USS Lassalle, the command ship for U.S. forces in the Gulf, and two unidentified speedboats.

The Americans said the Lassalle came under automatic gunfire. Iran accused the U.S. navy of attacking an Iranian boat and injuring one crewman.

Velayati told reporters Friday during a visit to the southern Iranian city of Kerman that Iranian military commanders had determined that the U.S. ship

was responsible for the incident, IRNA said. The report did not elaborate.

The Iranian foreign ministry earlier this week lodged a protest with the Swiss ambassador in Tehran, whose country represents U.S. interests in Iran.

Velayati also said he was optimistic that a regional security force would be established in the Gulf.

According to an agreement signed on March 6, Egyptian and Syrian troops deployed in the Gulf war were to become the nucleus of a 100,000-strong Arab force to protect the oil-rich region.

But Egypt has begun withdrawing its 36,000 troops from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, reportedly because of friction with Gulf states over arrangements for the regional force.

Oil leaking into Gulf at rate of 6,000 b/d

BOSTON (R) — Up to 6,000 barrels of oil a day continue to spill into the Gulf, where a slick which began during the war against Iraq has caused "monstrous" pollution of the coasts of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, according to new studies.

Gary Van Den Berg of the U.S. national oceanic and atmospheric administration took part in a shoreline assessment by the

Saudi government in which 125 clean-up sites were identified, up from a pre-survey estimate of 64.

Van Den Berg was quoted by the oil spill intelligence report Friday as saying that free-floating oil remains in the Gulf and that most bays were solidly covered with crude.

"There is still quite a bit of oil off Kuwait City and Safa-niyah," Van Den Berg said.

Text of U.N. resolution deploring Israeli deportations

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Following is the text of a Security Council resolution adopted unanimously Friday deploring Israel's deportation of four Palestinians to Lebanon last week-end and calling for their immediate safe return.

The Security Council, reaffirming its Resolution 681 (1990), Having learned with deep concern and consternation that Israel has, in violation of its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, and acting in opposition to relevant Security Council resolutions, and to the detriment of efforts to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, deported four Palestinian civilians on May 18, 1991.

1. Declares that the action of the Israeli authorities of deporting four Palestinians on May 18 is in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, which is applicable to all the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem;
2. Deplores this action and reiterates that Israel, the occupying power, refrain from deporting any Palestinian civilian from the occupied territories and ensure the safe and immediate return of all those deported;
3. Decides to keep the situation under review.

U.N. chief starts countdown to Western Sahara vote

UNITED NATIONS (R) — U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar has started a countdown to a referendum designed to end 15 years of war in Western Sahara.

U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar is in Rabat and goes on to the Polisario Front for talks with President Chadli Bejaïd and leaders of the Polisario guerrilla movement.

Spanish colonial rule ended in Western Sahara in 1975 with no agreement which would take over.

Polisarians will choose next year between independence and unity with Morocco.

The main aim of the secretary-general's trip is to set a start-date for a peace plan approved by the general assembly.

The timetable will allow 16 weeks for a new U.N. mission.

Minurso, to deploy 2,795 troops, police and civilian officials in the territory. A ceasefire will then take effect for 20 weeks until the referendum.

Minurso will identify eligible voters based on a Spanish census of 1974 which counted 74,000 Saharans. The phosphate-rich territory has an area of 252,000 square kilometres.

King Hassan will spend three days starting Monday in Algeria. Polisario has its main bases around refugee camps at the Tindouf Oasis in western Algeria.

Algeria and Morocco were long at loggerheads over Western Sahara but Algerian support for Polisario wound down after the guerrillas and Morocco accepted a U.N. peace plan.

No serious fighting has been

reported since November 1989. The Moroccan army claims to control over four-fifths of the territory.

Rabat's rapprochement with Algeria was strengthened when the two states formed the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) with Libya, Mauritania and Tunisia in February 1989.

The Western Sahara has been the main stumbling block to north African political and economic integration. The AMU is due to hold a special summit in Libya June 8 and 9.

King Hassan returned early this week from a visit to Western Sahara. An estimated 100,000 desert dwellers assembled in the dusty inland town of Smara to show allegiance to the Moroccan throne.

Israel willing to swap PoWs if Israelis in Lebanon alive

TEL AVIV (R) — Israel said Friday it would be willing to negotiate the release of Lebanese prisoners it holds — including Sheikh Abdul Karim Obeid — if it received confirmation that Israelis held in Lebanon were alive.

"When Israel receives signs of

life from the Israeli PoWs, Israel will be willing to negotiate the release of all the Lebanese held in Israel, including Sheikh Abdul Karim Obeid," Defence Ministry spokesman Danny Naveh said.

Naveh said Israel welcomed an offer by newly appointed Hizbollah (Party of God) leader Sheikh Abbas Masawi to exchange

Israelis held by his group in Lebanon for Lebanese prisoners held in Israel.

But Naveh said Masawi had to "lift the fog once and for all and supply the names of the prisoners and what their situation is" before Israel would consider such negotiations.

Returning workers burden Yemeni economy

By Mariam Isa
Reuters

HODEIDAH, Yemen — Saeed Abdullah sells bread in a tumble-down market called Saddam Street which sprang up during a Gulf crisis exodus of up to a million Yemeni workers from neighbouring states.

Like the majority of those who left Saudi Arabia when their residence permits were withdrawn last September, the Baker abandoned a thriving business and sold most of his possessions at a fraction of their worth.

Often forced to live in hastily erected shantytowns, the workers are a double burden on the struggling economy of this newly unified country.

Their arrival has doubled Yemen's unemployment rate to 30 per cent and deprived the government of millions of dollars of remittances which used to be North Yemen's main source of foreign exchange.

Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh told Reuters Tuesday that the Gulf crisis had cost the country about three billion dollars.

Economists say inflation has soared to an annual rate of at least 45 per cent, mainly because of the government's inability to find hard currency to import basic goods.

The black market rate for Saudi riyals has risen to 27 riyals per dollar — more than

twice the official rate of 12 to the dollar — from around 14 riyals when tribal North Yemen merged with the socialist south one year ago.

Cars with temporary black licence plates crowd the streets of the main cities of Hodeidah on the Red Sea and the capital Sanaa. Wealthier workers have set up shops but most of those who returned are unemployed.

Many have returned to villages in remote mountain areas but in some cases the welcome is wearing thin.

Yemenis in the shantytowns, living off savings or the sale of things they managed to bring with them, are growing frustrated.

"I don't want to go back to Saudi Arabia," said Yahia Abdullah, a welder who worked for 23 years in Jeddah. "But we want our government to do something for us — they haven't given us anything and we even have to pay for water and electricity."

"This is my country. I have to stay, I am content. But it is very difficult to get money and the government doesn't help us enough — the price for flour has doubled since I came back and sometimes there is none to buy."

In retaliation for Iraq during the Gulf crisis, Riyadh told an estimated 1.5 million Yemenis living in the kingdom they had one month to find Saudi sponsors and three months to find Saudi partners if they owned businesses.

Most of the traditionally proud Yemenis rejected the option and streamed back home after their government told them they would be exempt from customs duties on cars and belongings.

Officials say one million people returned, but independent estimates put the number between 600,000 and 900,000.

Foreign aid officials say little has been done to help the workers who returned. The crux of the problem is few countries want to help Yemen, which with nearly 12 million people is the poorest and most populous state on the Arabian peninsula.

Wealthy Gulf Arab states, which used to provide billions of dollars of financial aid, withdrew their support after Yemen refused to join the allied military coalition against Iraq.

The United States also cut off an estimated \$21 million of annual economic assistance. Other Western countries which used to provide support are suddenly not interested.

A foreign aid official, who did not want to be identified, said the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme were drawing up a \$245 million economic recovery plan with Yemen to help the returnees.

A first phase worth \$75 million would involve employing Yemenis to build roads, houses and health care centres in rural areas. But so far the only contributors were the World Bank with \$36

million and the Netherlands with 15 million, he said.

"The fact is that aid to this country has been cut tremendously — donors are not showing much interest," he said.

Local economists say \$180 million worth of oil exploration signature bonuses signed with Western firms during the last eight months would partly compensate for the loss of aid. But it will be years before Yemen, which now produces around 200,000 barrels per day of crude, can draw revenues if oil is discovered in the southern part of the country.

Some Yemeni economists say the merged government, which combined all 180,000 former northern and southern officials, is not handling the crisis well.

"We have two different thoughts in the government, each competing with the other for influence," Mohammad Abu Laboun, a northern parliament member who heads the body's watchdog economic committee told Reuters.

"A lot of money is being wasted," he said.

Last March Sanaa forecast a deficit of 15 billion riyals (\$1.25 billion) for unified Yemen's first budget in 1991.

More than half the 50.8 billion riyals (\$4.2 billion) of official 1991 expenditure was allocated for government salaries, Laboun said. Another 25 per cent was earmarked for defence and 16 per cent for education.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Lebanese Christian party elects chairman

BEIRUT (AP) — Dory Chamoun, son of the late President Camille Chamoun, was elected Saturday to head the right-wing Christian National Liberal Party his father founded. Dory Chamoun, 38, replaces his younger brother, Dany, who was assassinated last Oct. 21. His wife and two sons also were slain. Dory Chamoun, a lawyer, was elected unanimously by a party congress, a party announcement said. He said in a statement after the election that he would "reorganise the National Liberal Party to play a major role in Lebanon." He did not elaborate. He has been living in France since 1983, where he ran an import-export business. Before that, he served as the party's secretary-general for 10 years. Dany Chamoun was named party president after his father died in August 1987. Camille Chamoun, who founded the party in 1952, was president of Lebanon from 1952 to 1958.

King Fahd welcomes Lebanon-Syria treaty

DAMASCUS (R) — Saudi King Fahd has sent a cable to President Hafez Al Assad welcoming a friendship treaty between Syria and Lebanon, officials said Saturday. King Fahd, a member of a three-man committee set by the Arab League to end Lebanon's civil war, described the treaty as an historic event. "I am pleased to express to your excellency our hope that this historic event would further promote the distinctive relations between the two countries..." King Fahd's cable said. Assad and Lebanese President Elias Hrawi signed the accord which calls for closer cooperation between the two countries in the political, security, economic and other fields. The treaty was signed in Damascus Wednesday. Syria is the main foreign power broker in Lebanon where it has some 40,000 troops.

Fasting refugees given 3-month reprieve

PARIS (R) — The French government has granted nearly 200 Kurdish, Turkish and African refugees on hunger strike a three-month reprieve from expulsion while it studies their requests for political refugee status. The ministry of social affairs said Friday night it had granted temporary residence permits for "humanitarian reasons." The delay will allow the authorities to re-examine each case. The refugees have been fasting in church halls across France in a campaign to be recognised as political refugees. Some have not eaten for 50 days. French authorities have appointed a mediator in the dispute but have so far refused asylum on the grounds that the hunger strikers are "economic migrants." Last week, France's best-known campaigner for the poor, Abbe Pierre, 79, joined the hunger strike in sympathy.

Earthquake jolts Iranian city

NICOSIA (AP) — An earthquake rocked the outskirts of the northeastern Iranian city of Quchan, but there were no immediate reports of casualties or damage, the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) reported Saturday. IRNA, which is monitored in Nicosia, said the quake occurred at 11:30 p.m. (2000 GMT) Friday. Quchan, in Khorasan Province, is 650 kilometres north-east of Tehran. The agency said the quake measured 5.5 on the Richter scale, according to the Geophysics Center of Tehran University. The Richter scale is a measure of the energy released by an earthquake. A measure of 5 or above can cause considerable damage in urban areas. Several tremors hit southern Iranian cities on Wednesday. IRNA said there were no casualties but that damage in the city of Khonj was estimated at 140 million rials (\$20 million). Khonj is about 290 kilometres northwest of the Gulf port of Bandar Abbas.

French soldier killed in northern Iraq

INCIRLIK, Turkey (AP) — A French soldier was killed Friday and two others were injured during a mine-clearing operation in northern Iraq, an allied military spokesman said. In a separate blast, two U.S. troops were injured. The death was the first from a land mine among more than 21,000 troops and civilians from 12 countries involved in the operation to save Iraqi Kurdish refugees. Three American and two French troops have been killed in other accidents since Operation Provide Comfort began in early April. Several refugees have been killed or maimed by mines planted by Iraq and Turkey on their mountainous border before the Gulf war. Col. Don Kirchhoff, a spokesman for the allied effort stationed at Incirlik Base, Turkey, said that the Frenchman was killed near Derak in northern Iraq. The other two French soldiers were slightly injured, he said. Their identities and names of their units would be withheld pending notification of next of kin, he said. A U.S. soldier suffered severe leg injuries and a marine suffered light shrapnel wounds to his face and hands in a land mine blast about two kilometres south of Sawita in northern Iraq, Kirchhoff said. He said the two were evacuated by a British helicopter. Their names and units also were withheld. In earlier incidents, two U.S. troops were killed in traffic accidents and a marine was killed in a traffic accident and another was killed May 21 when a crate fell on him at the allied forward base at Silipt, Turkey. There are about 11,700 U.S. troops and about 2,130 French troops involved in the operation to sustain and repatriate the Kurds.

Fire kills six in Istanbul

ISTANBUL (AP) — Fire engulfed an apartment block in a crowded neighbourhood Saturday, killing at least six people, police said. Ten people were still feared missing in the gutted building. The fire broke out at 4 a.m. (0100 GMT) in the five-story building which also housed textile workshops and a restaurant. The upper floors were used for residential purposes. It was not immediately clear what caused the fire. Eyewitnesses reported that the building, located in the downtown Beyoglu district, was mostly gutted and rescue workers were searching for bodies in the debris. Police said 10 people were unaccounted for. "My three children are still inside with my mother," the semi-official Anatolia-News Agency quoted a crying woman as saying. One of the victims jumped to his death from third floor, officials said. It took the fire brigade several hours to extinguish the blaze because firefighting vehicles could not pass through the narrow streets in this old part of the city. They had to sprinkle water from neighbouring buildings.

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

10:25 Rome (AZ)
13:40 Tripoli (LN)
19:15 Larnaca (CY)

MARKET PRICES

Upperflower price in lbs per kg

Apple 300 / 300
Banana 300 / 300
Banana (Mozambique) 450 / 400
Beans 460 / 400
Broad beans 600 / 500
Cabbage 120 / 80
Carrot 200 / 150
Cauliflower 180 / 120
Cucumbers (large) 140 / 80
Cucumbers (small) 260 / 220
Eggplant 300 / 250
Garlic 500 / 400
Grapefruit 250 / 200
Lemon 340 / 280
Lettuce (per cwt) 150 / 100
Marrow (large) 120 / 80
Marrow (small) 260 / 220

Other Flights (Terminal 1)

10:25 Jeddah (RJ)
10:55 Delta, Bahrain (RJ)
18:00 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
18:45 Paris, Geneva (RJ)
18:55 London, Brussels (RJ)
19:00 Madrid, Rome (RJ)
19:15 Frankfurt, Vienna (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

12:40 Tripoli (LN)
18:30 Larnaca (CY)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

(Terminal 1)
12:20 Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
13:45 Cairo (RJ)

FOR THE TRAVELLER

AMMAN: Hussein Medical Centre 81381/32
Khaldi Maternity, J. Amn 64281/6
Al-Beth Maternity, J. Amn 64241/2

Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality 787111
Telephone Information 945845
(directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Repairs 771101/5
Abdullah Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Int. Airport 08-53200

Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Mithas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 664171/4
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 945845
AS-Musharraf Hospital 667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666127/31
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6
Iraqi, Al-Musharraf 771101/5
Al-Bashir, J. Abdali 771117/6
Army, Marka 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 674155
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983322
Zarqa National Hospital (09)991071
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)988752
AQABA:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275
Ibn Al Nafies Hospital (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

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Army, Marka 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital

Indonesian trade delegation visits APC, Aqaba port

AMMAN (J.T.) — The visiting Indonesian trade delegation Saturday toured the Arab Potash Company (APC) and the Port of Aqaba, in southern Jordan, and held talks with Jordanian businessmen to promote trade between Jordan and Indonesia.

The delegation, which is led by Trade Minister Arifin Siregar, first met with members of the Amman Chamber of Commerce to discuss trade exchanges and announced that they would be holding a day-long business gathering at the Marriott Hotel, Sunday, in order to help promote the sale of Indonesian goods in Jordan and to display samples of Indonesian goods.

Jordan normally imports wood, paper, chemicals and iron from Indonesia and sells the Asian nation a variety of products including pesticides, electrical appliances, fertilisers, veterinary products, textiles and carpets as well as gas cookers, canned food and tobacco.

The trade delegation visited the APC plant near the southern tip of the Dead Sea and met Minister of Transport Jamal Sarai and APC Director Ali Ensour to learn about the pro-

duction of potash, part of which is sold to Indonesian markets.

At present APC produces 1.4 million tonnes to potash, but once the expansion project has been completed another 400,000 tonnes will be added, raising to 1.8 million tonnes the annual production by 1993 and to 2.2 million by 1995.

Indonesia started importing APC products in 1983 and last year it imported 110,000 tonnes, according to Mr. Ensour.

The delegation members toured the plant and were briefed on various production plans.

Later they stopped in Aqaba and visited local industries, including the Jordan Wood Industries Company, and the port facilities.

The delegation members were briefed by local port officials on the port's operations and trade facilities.

According to the delegation's programme, its members will Sunday address a press conference to discuss trade links between Jordan and Indonesia and have scheduled talks with Minister of Industry and Trade Ziyad Fariz.

Jordan urges U.N. Security Council to put an end to Israel's practices, help solve the Palestine problem

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan has demanded that the U.N. Security Council put an end to Israel's inhuman practices and take all necessary steps towards achieving a peaceful settlement to the Palestine problem and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Jordan's Ambassador to the United Nations Abdullah Salah told a council meeting, called to discuss Israel's deportation of four Palestinians to southern Lebanon last week, that such outrageous Israeli actions require a drastic and prompt action on the part of the Security Council.

Mr. Salah was addressing a council session which ended with unanimous condemnation of Israel's expulsion of the four Palestinians and demanded their immediate safe return.

The resolution declared the expulsions to be in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention on the treatment of civilians in time of war and detrimental to Middle East peace efforts.

In his address to the council Friday evening, Mr. Salah drew the council members' attention to Israel's previous violations of



Abdullah Salah

sponsibility towards the Palestine problem which is the crux of the Arab-Israeli conflict," Mr. Salah said.

He said that the Security Council, which proved its credibility in the Gulf crisis, should protect this credibility and adopt a similar prompt and responsible measure towards the Palestine issue and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

"Until a final comprehensive settlement to the Arab-Israeli question and the Palestine problem has been reached, the Security Council should take whatever steps necessary to provide protection to the Palestinian citizens under Israeli occupation," Mr. Salah said.

He said that protection should include preventing Israel from pursuing its inhuman and illegal practices in the occupied territories, including the deportation of Arab citizens from their homeland.

The deportation brought to 66 the number of Palestinians expelled by Israel since the start of the ongoing uprising in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip in December of 1987.

King receives cables of congratulation on independence anniversary

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Saturday received cables of good wishes from senior government officials and prominent representatives of various organisations in Jordan on Jordan's 45th independence anniversary.

The cables lauded the King's leadership and his continued efforts to serve this people and nation.

Among those sending cables were Prime Minister Mudar Badran, speakers of the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament, Amman mayor, the chief Islamic justice, the army chief of staff, directors of civil defence, public security and intelligence departments and heads of various popular organisations.

On the independence anniversary, the King also received cables of good wishes from heads of Arab, Islamic and friendly nations.

In a statement on the independence anniversary, the prime minister said that Jordan would always be ready to defend the homeland and protect the country's dignity and independence.

"The past few months have proved that Jordan was true to this mission and true to the principles of the Great Arab Revolt which strove to unite the Arab Nation," said Mr. Badran in a statement to Radio Jordan.

The prime minister said that Jordan had always been committed to the Arab and Islamic Na-

tion and ready to defend its independence and that of the Arab World at large.

Referring to King Hussein's recent address at the Royal War College, the prime minister said that the address contained a call to the whole Arab Nation to rise up again and forge ahead with a new strength.

The King's speech underlined the importance for the Arabs to heal the rifts and to defend their existence, their independence and their homeland in the face of hostile forces which harbour designs against the Arab Nation, the prime minister added.

Mr. Badran expressed his congratulations to the King and the Jordanian people on the anniversary.

ACC becomes the only source of loans for farmers

AMMAN (Petra) — The Agricultural Credit Corporation (ACC), which is now the sole source of loans for Jordanian farmers, will grant loans for various agricultural projects, like planting of fruit trees, processing of fodder, purchasing of farming equipment and building up refrigerating stores to keep vegetables and fruit, according to ACC Director General Mansour Ben Tarif.

The ACC will also grant loans to fishermen planning to buy fishing boats and equipment, and to breeders of livestock of all kinds, Mr. Ben Tarif said in his statement Saturday.

"The ACC has been authorised as the sole source for granting loans to farmers and cooperative organisations following years of problems related to loans given to farmers by several money-lending institutions in the country," Mr. Ben Tarif said.

Last month, the Council of

Ministers decided that the ACC would become the sole authority to grant loans and decide on matters related to credits and collection of debts, he noted.

The ACC will be focusing attention on small farmers and agricultural cooperatives in a bid to promote agricultural production in the rural areas of Jordan.

According to Mr. Ben Tarif, the ACC has so far granted Jordanian farmers JD 95 million since its establishment in the 1960s, but only JD 61 million had been paid by the debtors who included 79,000 farmers and land developers.

He said the loans benefited 55,000 agricultural projects in the country.

Following the floods that hit the southern regions of Jordan in April, Mr. Ben Tarif announced that the ACC would reschedule the payments of the loans and would issue new loans to farmers to help them resume their work.

JMA comes under fire just before elections

Minister defends JMB, says it upgrades medical profession

AMMAN (J.T.) — Health Minister Dr. Adnan Al Jaljoul Saturday moved to defend the Jordan Medical Board (JMB) and its strategies which, he said, were designed to upgrade the medical profession in Jordan.

"The JMB is currently revising the board's statutes for the purpose of introducing amendments, especially to those articles which were behind doctors' recent complaints," said Dr. Jaljoul in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

He was reacting to a memorandum which a group of Jordanian doctors and specialists submitted to Prime Minister Mudar Badran describing the JMB as being harmful to their interests.

"The JMB is also going ahead

with plans to offer training courses and on-the-job training to new doctors within the course of a programme in government hospitals and health centres as well as hospitals operated by the Royal Medical Services," said the minister.

He said that the doctors undergoing training would be receiving monthly salaries during the training period, and the training courses would help them pass the JMB examination.

The JMB's strategies and statutes came under fire by doctors and specialists attending Friday's meeting at the Professional Association Complex to prepare the ground for the election of a new president for the Jordan Medical

Association (JMA) and to review JMA's financial and administrative report.

Two candidates, Dr. Hassan Khreis and Dr. Ishaq Maraqa, are running for the JMA's president's post, and the general assembly is holding a session next Friday to choose the next JMA president and board.

Criticism during Friday's session was also directed against the JMA statute, with many members demanding that it be amended. The plight of nearly 900 unemployed doctors was discussed and there were calls that the JMA, which has savings reaching up to JD 5 million, start giving part of the profits on these savings to benefit the unemployed doctors.

Masri describes visit to Turkey as successful, positive

AMMAN (J.T.) — Foreign Minister Taher Al Masri has described his four-day visit to Turkey, which ended Friday, as successful, positive and fruitful and said that Jordanian-Turkish contacts would continue.

Mr. Masri told Radio Jordan that his visit aimed at establishing contacts, which were disrupted during the Gulf crisis, with the Turkish government.

The minister, who delivered a message to Turkish President Turgut Ozal, said that Jordan would continue to maintain its political and commercial contacts with Turkey, noting that the two countries assume very important geographical locations in the area.

The King's message to President Ozal, Mr. Masri said, stressed the need for continued meetings between officials from the two countries to discuss bilateral issues and to find means of promoting bilateral cooperation in various fields.

"The message also placed President Ozal in the correct picture about developments in the Middle East region as Turkey plays an important role in these developments and serves as a main



Taher Al Masri

link between the Arabs and the Western nations due to its significant geographic location," the minister noted.

He said he had discussed with the Turkish president, prime minister and foreign minister the Arab-Israeli conflict, the situation in the Gulf and the internal situation in Iraq in addition to bilateral relations.

Mr. Masri, who began his visit to Turkey last Tuesday, was quoted in Ankara as saying that his mission was part of an overall Jordanian diplomatic offensive aimed at reactivating contacts among countries of the region and at presenting Jordan's views with regard to the peace process and the Palestine issue.

In Ankara, a Foreign Ministry spokesman was quoted by Reuters as saying that Mr. Masri and the Turkish leaders agreed to revitalise ties between their countries after clearing up differences caused by the Gulf crisis.

The spokesman said a perfect understanding was reached between the two sides to revitalise political as well as economic and cultural ties.

According to the Turkish spokesman, Jordan had paid for the damage to several Turkish lorries which were attacked by Jordanian mobs near Ramtha last December while on their way to Saudi Arabia.

The attacks on the lorries happened partly because of Turkey's stand vis-a-vis the Gulf crisis.

Mr. Masri told Radio Jordan that the Arabs and Turkey could launch numerous joint ventures in view of Turkey's need of the Arab oil and natural gas.

Designer uses colours, letters to revive indigenous fashion

By Mariam M. Shablin
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — In the aftermath of the Gulf war the spirit of revival has brought out the best and brightest ideas in Iraqi-born fashion and jewelry designer Hana Sadeq Beraudo as is evident in her summer collection which promises to be the best she has produced to date.

With brightly coloured cottons, linens and silks Ms. Beraudo has managed to put together a collection which is likely to have something for everyone in terms of style, colour and of course price.

Saying that in the Arab World "we don't have standard sizes," Ms. Beraudo has

designed clothes that have shapes fitting every body. In other words, there is something attractive for women of all shapes and sizes.

Tourquoise, yellow, green, purple, shades of brown and brick join traditional beige, khaki, black, white and an occasional printed fabric to complete the colours of the dozen designs that make up Ms. Beraudo's summer collection.

Evidently aware of the needs of Jordanian working women and students, Ms. Beraudo has designed a series of "ready to wear," which she has called the "morning collection."

The morning collection consists of ready to wear ensembles with jackets that can be

matched with both skirts and pants. Blouses and vests are complementary to both.

Ms. Beraudo's day collection has expanded from more traditional Arab designs to a variety of avant-garde oriental patterns that may appeal more to those who believe "simple is beautiful."

Three piece "tailleurs" (suits), in five different colours, constitute Ms. Beraudo's answer to a working woman's dreams. Long, wide jackets can be matched with blouses, skirts and pants.

Sirwal (pants) and long sleeved shirts in purple and khaki are a sure attraction for students and younger women.

The morning collection, which was mainly designed to

suit working women and students, is also priced to appeal to this group. Prices range from JD 25 to JD 55 for an outfit.

The afternoon collection, which includes more exclusive designs, is composed of a wide variety of dresses, pants suits and tailleurs.

Dresses, blouses, skirts and the sirwal, are finely embroidered in the damascene tradition. Ms. Beraudo's designs have become increasingly fine and dainty since her first collection was shown in Amman over three years ago.

The designer uses calligraphic prints on shawls, skirts, T-shirts and pants. Many of the dresses have attached shawls, which can be removed, and

vests are also a major complementary item in the collection.

The designer has managed to put together a more feminine and versatile collection in cut and design than ever before.

Mono-coloured damascene embroidery on good quality Iraqi, Syrian and Egyptian cotton as well as Sudanese linen has rendered Ms. Beraudo's a very classy afternoon and early evening collection. The afternoon collection ranges from JD 60 to JD 120 in price.

The dressy designs intended for evening wear are by far the most colourful and rich of the three part collection. Rich tra-

ditional Palestinian, Syrian, Iraqi and Turkmen embroidery decorate many a neckline of the mostly long evening wear.

The evening wear is made from silk like cotton in a wide variety of colours and designs taken mainly from the more traditional Middle Eastern dresses.

With the summer coming, Ms. Beraudo's collection is poised to surprise and please fashion fans and the ordinary women alike as she unveils her collection along with the silver jewellery she designed herself.

The fashion show will take place Monday afternoon at the Plaza Hotel and will be her first one this year.



Hana Sadeq Beraudo

WHAT'S GOING ON

EXHIBITION

★ Exhibition of etchings, lithographs and monographs, by Ahmad Nawash and Yasser Durweik at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation (10 a.m. — 5 p.m.)

LECTURE

★ Lecture in Arabic on aspects of literary criticism by Dr. Luc Barbulesco at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation at 6:30 p.m.



Two 'ensembles' of Hana Beraudo's summer collection made up of pants, skirt and cape combinations, embroidered with golden calligraphic ornaments.



Two 'ensembles' of Hana Beraudo's summer collection made up of pants, skirt and cape combinations, embroidered with golden calligraphic ornaments.

Gulf crisis continues for Jordan's port

AMMAN (AP) — The continuing embargo on neighbouring Iraq is choking Jordan's only seaport and damaging the nation's economy, almost three months after the Gulf war ceasefire.

Allied ships in the Red Sea daily stop and search vessels headed to the port of Aqaba, a major transit route for Iraq-bound goods, and plan to do so until the embargo is lifted or other arrangements are made to enforce it.

But Jordanian officials complain the operation also is denting their own economy — which is not subject to the U.N. embargo.

Shipping officials say it costs companies an extra \$150,000 to \$200,000 if a vessel is diverted because of suspected violations — a risk they say is scaring off many shippers, possibly for good.

"One day they will say, 'to hell with Aqaba,'" said Tawfiq Kassar, president of Jordan's Shipping Agents Association.

"We are suffering here from the elbow-twisting of the United States and the allies," Mr. Kassar said.

Already, about a dozen shipping lines have halted service to Aqaba until the embargo is over, and others are considering it, including one that has lost \$1.6 million so far, Mr. Kassar said.

The lost trade has contributed to more than \$1 billion in lost trade suffered by this country of 3.1 million people due to the Gulf war.

Shipping difficulties have caused shortages of food, medicine, machinery and raw materials for industry.

Yacoub Amre, a pharmacist, said heavy items like syrups or powders that are usually sent by ship rather than air are scarce.

"Right now, there is no cereal for babies," he said.

"At one point, we had shortages of eye drops, for a period of two months," he said, adding that diabetics had to go around to all the pharmacies just to find one vial of insulin.

Aqaba has handled most of Iraq's ship-borne trade since the 1980-88 Iraq-Iran war led to closure of Iraq's own ports.

By positioning themselves at the strait of Tiran, the entrance to the narrow Gulf of Aqaba, allied ships in the Red Sea can scruti-

nize every vessel.

When an Algerian relief ship with goods for Iraq docked recently after an 11-day embargo delay, it was without eight electric generators that had been aboard.

Relief officials said the generators and spare parts for them were intended for health projects in Iraq.

The ship, "the Aures," was diverted to Port Suez, Egypt, to be off-loaded because some of its containers were not accessible for on-board inspection.

The rest of the cargo cleared, but the generators and parts were held back, said Salah Wajidi, a Red Crescent representative.

Such stoppages brought ship traffic almost to a standstill during the Gulf war. Only two or three ships a day would dock.

Bassam Qaqish, president of the Aqaba region Authority, said about a dozen ships were in port last Tuesday — still only half the pre-war levels.

"It's much better now, although we still have occasional interruptions," he said.

He said in recent weeks the inspections had taken "a sharp negative turn."

Under the new sanctions guidelines, all cargo containers must be placed in a way that they can be inspected.

Mr. Qaqish and Mr. Kassar said this was physically impossible, especially when containers were placed in the hold of a ship, stacked too high or too close together.

"Hence, vessels are diverted to other ports to be off-loaded for inspection," Mr. Qaqish said.

He said this results in a loss of 12 to 14 days, at a cost of \$150,000 to \$200,000 per vessel.

Mr. Kassar said 37 ships had been turned back during the embargo. This may not seem like many, he said, but "each ship would contain cargo in which 1,000 people would be involved."

They would include all those handling the cargo, including merchants and their employees.

Mr. Qaqish said he had suggested in a letter to U.S. Secretary of State James Baker a month ago that inspections be made in the port of Aqaba by a joint U.N.-Jordanian team.

He said he has not received an answer to his letter.

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Where are the Falashas settling?

THERE IS nothing astonishing about the Israeli airlifting of thousands of Falashas from Ethiopia on the heels of the collapse of the regime of Ethiopian President Mengistu Haile Mariam. Israel had done it before in 1984 when a secret Israeli-financed operation called Operation Moses airlifted about 7,000 Falashas from that country to Israel ostensibly to save them from famine. Israel has a standing policy to bring in as many Jews as possible to the Zionist state from the four corners of the world and has not stopped making that policy a cornerstone in its quest to colonise Arab territories and consolidate its control over them.

What is really astonishing about the airlift of Falashas is the U.S. role, especially in the wake of Washington's pious protestations against Israeli settlements in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights. Only few hours before the news broke out about the airlifting of the Ethiopian Jews, U.S. President George Bush had gone out of his way to back up and support U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's description of Israeli settlements as the biggest obstacles to peace. The Arab side received with much enthusiasm the latest U.S. pronouncements against the continuing Israeli settlement programme and saw them as new signals that the Bush administration was serious after all about cajoling the parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict into accepting and participating in the U.S. brokered peace initiative. Regrettably, the U.S. active involvement in the latest airlifting of Jews to Israel, especially in the wake of all the U.S. condemnations of the Israeli settlement policy puts a big questionmark on the sincerity and seriousness of the U.S. in sponsoring peace efforts in the Middle East.

The White House confirmed Friday that President Bush had a role in the "emergency humanitarian airlift" that was bringing thousands of Jews from Ethiopia to Israel. White House Press Secretary Marlin Fitzwater also affirmed that the airlift was the result of an agreement between Israel and Ethiopia after consultations with the U.S. Fitzwater went on to add that "the decision to allow the Falashas to depart the country was taken in response to a letter from President Bush on May 22 to Acting Ethiopian President Tesfaye Gebre-Kidan." Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir was so overwhelmed with the U.S. endeavour that he picked up the phone and called Bush "to thank him for the American role in the release of the Falashas."

Under normal circumstances there would be nothing wrong in President Bush trying to help the Ethiopian Jews emigrate to Israel had Tel Aviv's record on even the Baker peace process been more forthcoming and cooperative. The U.S. secretary of state has complained to the U.S. Congress that everytime he made an effort to bring peace to the Middle East Israel confronted him with a new and more determined settlement programme that aborted everything he was trying to do and accomplish.

How in the world Tel Aviv is going to take the words of counsel from the U.S. seriously or heed Washington's pleas for a more cooperative stance when the White House never ceases to provide Israel with material aid and support and facilitates its expansionist policy to the detriment of the Palestinian people. The some 15,000 Falashas already airlifted to Israel in addition to the hundreds of thousands of Soviet Jews that are flooding Israel annually with not only Washington's blessings but also its insistence, will no doubt be translated into more and more Israeli settlements being constructed in Arab territories. Washington should get its act straight for once. If it really seeks to halt the Israeli settlement programme it should curtail the flow of people that feed this programme.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I daily Saturday outlined Jordan's achievements on the domestic and pan-Arab fronts during the past 45 years of its independence and said that the Kingdom has always embodied national principles and acted to achieve national goals. Under His Majesty King Hussein, the Kingdom has been able to translate the aspirations and the dreams into realities, and to pursue the path of development and progress. In the military field, King Hussein saw to it that the armed forces are well equipped to defend the homeland while in the social health, agricultural and industrial spheres major strides have been taken in the course of developing the nation, said the paper. It said that Jordan under King Hussein has served as a model to the other Arab states in the field of national standards and in embracing democracy and striving to offer freedoms to the public in every domain. Furthermore, the paper said, Jordan under King Hussein continues to strive to achieve solidarity among the Arab states despite the setbacks and regardless of the numerous challenges on the way. The paper said that while Jordanians take pride in the past achievements they have no alternative but to pursue serious efforts designed to corroborate the nation's independence through further achievements, cohesion and unity.

A columnist in Al Ra'i Arabic daily says that the U.S. administration will soon be faced with a real test when the U.N. Security Council will be debating the question of Israel's deportation of Palestinian citizens from their homeland. Abdel Raziz Omar notes that the non-aligned group at the United Nations submitted a request for a council meeting following Israel's deportation of four Arab citizens from their homes in the Gaza Strip to southern Lebanon because such inhuman practice violates all the Geneva conventions and the United Nations principles and charter. Omar notes that Washington which massed troops and led an aggression on Iraq for its occupation of Kuwait under the pretext of implementing the international legitimacy and U.N. resolutions is expected to take action first at the U.N. Security Council where Israel should not only be condemned for expelling the four Palestinians but also should be ordered to comply with council resolutions and withdraw its forces from Palestinian lands occupied since 1967.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

How accurate is UNICEF report on poverty?

IS IT true that one third of the Jordanian people live below the line of poverty?

The Amman-based UNICEF regional office for the Middle East and North Africa issued a short report, "Jordanian Children in the Eye of the Storm," covering the social and economic situation in Jordan, and the state of children and mothers under the impact of the Gulf crisis. The report was issued four months ago at the peak of the Gulf crisis and war, when it was feared that the Jordanian economy lost 39 to 77 per cent of its gross national product, and that the standard of living in the country was near collapse.

At the time, Amman was crowded with hundreds of foreign journalists whose eyes and ears were wide open for news. They reported the story to readers, listeners and viewers around the world, stressing the UNICEF finding that one third of Jordanians lived in poverty, some in absolute poverty.

Jordanian writers and columnists picked the statement up, sometimes without reading the text of the report, and built conclusions on it. They treated the magic percentage as a fact as long as a respectable agency of the United Nations has used it.

I had no intention then challenge the UNICEF estimates. I wanted to facilitate the mission of UNICEF, which was aimed at urging world and the international community to provide more financial aid to Jordan, and perhaps to raise the budget of the

UNICEF itself to enable it to carry out more health and educational projects to serve Jordanian children and mothers in poor areas.

Now that the cloud has cleared, and it became obvious that the Jordanian economy was not devastated, it is time to re-examine the report thoroughly and determine the real ratio of the poor among Jordanians.

The Ministry of Social Development conducted a survey of pockets of poverty in 1988. That survey concluded that around 19 per cent of Jordanians were below the line of poverty as defined by the survey itself. Those who conducted the survey, believe that the economic crisis of 1988/1989 may have raised the ratio by up to 2.5 percentage points.

Except for that survey, no study has been made to update the ratio or to measure the change that may have taken place under the impact of the Gulf crisis.

UNICEF did not conduct a comprehensive study. It only assumed under the circumstances, that poverty must have "increased from around 20 per cent to 23 per cent of the entire population." This is a reasonable assumption. It went on to state that: "Due to the impact of the Gulf crisis and war, this figure has increased briskly, perhaps to close to 30 per cent of all families." It is evident that the report was only speculating in general terms.

It did not use the words "one third." It only talked about the probability of some thing close to 30 per cent. The speculation of the report writer is of course as good, or bad, as the speculation of any other economist. But the report is not a first hand information to be quoted by researchers as a definite fact.

The percentage of the poor in Jordan may be close to 30 per cent, but the UNICEF report did not make any claim that the figure used was determined scientifically. Thus the UNICEF report should not be understood or used beyond its human framework.

UNICEF did in good faith what it thought will serve Jordan and secure more help to Jordanian families. The report achieved all or part of its noble objectives, and Mr. Richard Reed deserved the Order of Independence which was bestowed upon him last week at the occasion of his departure as director of the UNICEF office in Amman.

However, repeating the unconfirmed high ratio of poverty is hurting the image of Jordan socially and economically. There is no reason to believe that poverty in Jordan rose during the Gulf crisis. My own estimate of the poor is still in the order of 17 per cent, which is the normal percentage in a free market economy system.

By Dr. Fahd Al Fanek

Mideast peace possible but shrinking, say U.S. experts

By Rosalind Mandine
USIA

WASHINGTON — The so-called "window of opportunity" for peace in the Middle East exists, but is shrinking, a panel of experts at a Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee hearing agreed May 22.

However, the panelists sharply divided on who will keep the window open and exactly how they will do so.

The panelists included: Samuel Lewis, president of the U.S. Institute of Peace and former U.S. ambassador to Israel; Lucius Battle, former U.S. ambassador to Egypt and former assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern and South Asian affairs; George Ball, former undersecretary of state and former U.S. representative to the United Nations; Martin Indyk, Executive director of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy; Professor Ian Lustick, Department of Government at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire; and Helena Cobban, scholar-in-Residence at the Foundation for Middle East Peace.

The hearing was chaired by Senator Sanford, Democrat from North Carolina.

"The window of opportunity is closing, but it is not quite closed. Peace can be achieved between Israel, Palestinians, Syrian, Jordanians, and other Arab states only in stages. Another stage now remains possible, and worthy of tenacious pursuit," Ambassador Lewis told the panel.

Noting that the "list of obstacles to peace seems endless," Lewis commended Secretary Baker's repeated trips to the Middle East in the hope of narrowing differences and moving the peace process forward.

"What are his chances? Seemingly slim, but not hopeless. And the effort is eminently worthy, for the war did shake some elements of the Arab-Israeli stalemate. President Bush and the United States do have unprecedented political weight in the region, at least for the moment; and the United States has too much at risk in the region not to make every reasonable effort to change the self-destructive



course of this endemic conflict," Lewis said.

"There is an improved climate for peace. But the slightly improved conditions will not last long. If we do not succeed there will be a lengthy and dangerous situation which will not be in our interest or the world's," Ambassador Battle said.

George Ball questioned whether the United States should continue its role in the Middle East peace process. He asserted that the United States is "too one-sided in its policies, particularly on Israel.... We have become completely discredited in the peace process. We should hand over the process to the United Nations Security Council, with a settlement based on the U.N. Charter and international law."

Professor Lustick questioned the practicality and relevancy of using diplomacy to move the peace process forward. In order for diplomacy to work, all parties must be able to envision a mutually acceptable end — at

present this is impossible, Lustick said.

"It is a political problem, not a diplomatic problem.... Progress is not Secretary Baker going back and forth to the region. Progress is political change in Israel, the Palestinians, and Arab states that allow parties to accept a mutually acceptable agreement," he said.

Lustick put the burden of this political change on Israel, saying "Creating political change in Israel is what is needed. Under a (Labour Party leader Shimon) Peres government both sides could conceive mutually acceptable ends."

Martin Indyk challenged Lustick's assertion, saying that the Shamir government is in a strong position to negotiate peace with the Arab states.

"The political reality is the Likud is in government and is in a stronger position than ever. A large majority of Israelis want the Likud to negotiate 'land for peace.' The Likud government can deliver, the problem is whether they want to deliver."

Indyk said.

"Interim arrangements between Israelis and Palestinians can be arranged. But the Israelis won't give up territory in advance (of negotiations). The Israelis do want to change their political relationship with the Palestinians," Indyk added.

Helena Cobban strongly disagreed with Indyk, saying that Israeli government practices of deportation, land expropriation and a growing number of settlements in the occupied territories did not add up to a desire for an improved relationship with the Palestinians. Indyk quickly countered her assertion, saying that the Israeli government has recently released a large number of Palestinian detainees, instituted economic reform measures in the territories and allowed Palestinian universities to re-open.

"The settlements, however, are a straightforward provocation by (Housing Minister) Ariel Sharon to derail the peace process," Indyk said.

In continuing the discussion on

the need for political change in Israel, Lewis stressed the issue of Israeli feelings of "fear and anger" and its impact on Israeli policy.

Lewis noted an Israeli pollster's conclusion that "the overwhelming hostility of Arabs to Israel has the cumulative effect of making Israelis both angry and scared, making the Israeli electorate very conservative."

"There is a lot of fear and anger in all the communities," Cobban said, adding that "it is important to build relationships with people that you fear — we should be urging this to our Israeli friends."

Cobban suggested that the U.S. aid to Israel should be tied to the concessions it is ready to make for peace. The United States, while avoiding interference in the Israeli domestic political scene, should "structure incentives for Israeli public so that they do what is in the best interest of their country," she said.

Lewis asked "why no one is asking the Arabs about what in-

centives it will take for them to make concessions?"

Cobban suggested putting the issue of the Golan Heights on the negotiating table as an incentive for Syria to participate in negotiations. Lustick said that the Arab states have adhered to U.S. policy on the peace process for some time now and that there is not much else the United States can ask of them — a suggestion which brought strong reactions from Indyk and Lewis.

Lewis said Syria's policies in Lebanon and ties to terrorism, including past acts against U.S. military personnel, is an important issue to be addressed.

Indyk continued, "The idea that there is nothing to imagine to ask of Arabs to do on the peace process is ludicrous. They must give peace and security — there have been no such offers of peace coming from the Arabs."

Cobban countered Indyk's comments, saying the Palestine Liberation Organisation did make such an offer in 1988 by recognising Israel's right to exist and renouncing terrorism and that this offer "was rebuffed" by the Israeli government.

Indyk scoffed at Cobban's remarks, responding, PLO leader Yasser "Arafat managed to bluff out a few words we extracted from him in order to get a dialogue with the United States. The PLO is a non-starter." He added that the Shamir government is ready to talk to Palestinian representatives from the occupied territories.

Palestinian representatives from the territories "see themselves as representing the PLO," Cobban underscored. "There is no possibility of any Palestinian to come forward with any credibility to challenge the role of the PLO," she said.

The panelists agreed that Palestinians in the territories should be allowed a "free political life" and that this opening would encourage local leadership to emerge.

Ambassador Battle concluded: "The issue of who represents these people is a crucial issue in the procedure. But until Israel permits normal political gatherings on the West Bank and Gaza Strip no local leadership can emerge."

U.S.' decisive 'victory' turns into messy peace

By Patrick Cockburn

IN the weeks before the Gulf war, commentators divided into those who believed the defeat of Iraq would stabilise the Middle East and those who warned that the allies would be sucked into a quagmire. Supporters of the quagmire thesis felt victory over Saddam Hussein would produce new problems in an area of chronic instability. The more militant supporters of war said such considerations did not alter the main objective of evicting Iraqi troops from Kuwait.

The militants had a good war. Television showed Iraqi soldiers surrendering in tens of thousands. Allied casualties were minimal. Saddam Hussein, accepted all the United Nations Security Council resolutions. Growing a little too soon, The Sunday Times on March 3 published an article entitled "How the prophets of doom lost face," with the query in bold type: "Is it time for the Jeremiahs to eat their words?" The implication was that the war had been short, sharp and decisive.

Unfortunately, it rapidly became evident that the war was not over. The same weekend, that the Sunday Times piece appeared, Shi'ite Muslim rebels took over the main cities of southern Iraq. By mid-March the Iraqi army was involved in more intense fighting than had been seen at the height of the war. By the end of the month more than

two million Kurds were fleeing into the mountainous borders of Turkey and Iran.

February's military victory began to look less decisive, and protagonists of the quagmire theory of Middle East politics could raise their heads again.

Other aspects of the quagmire became evident in the aftermath of the war. Both Iraq and Kuwait remain chronically unstable. The ruling family of Kuwait, the Al Sabahs, had learnt and forgotten nothing in their months in exile in Saudi Arabia. Promised elections were delayed. As a commercial entrepot, Kuwait had depended on the 400,000 Palestinians and 50,000 Iraqis who lived there before the war. Now, most of these were unable to return to their homes or were subject to arbitrary arrest if they did.

In Iraq, Saddam Hussein survived the war and the Kurdish and Shi'ite rebellions in March, but his survival has simply institutionalised instability. Iraqis inside and outside the government are conscious that the invasion of Kuwait was his idea. For seven months he refused to withdraw and, when he did it was too late to avert a war that Iraq was bound to lose.

The ferocity with which the rebellions were crushed in the north and south further alienated the Shi'ite (53 per cent of the Iraqi population) and the Kurds (14 per cent). But the miscalculations that led to the war have also alienated much of the educated

middle class in Baghdad, who may never have liked Saddam Hussein, but were loyal during the Iran-Iraq war. The base of the regime is now very narrow, dependent on Saddam's extended family at the top, the Republican Guard, and the security services.

Together, these may be enough to enable the Iraqi leader to survive, but he is likely to be always on the defensive. While he remains in power Iraq will remain diplomatically isolated. An agreement granting real autonomy to Kurdistan may reduce international pressure, but at the cost of letting the Kurdish rebel leadership become the predominant military force in the three northern Iraqi provinces. Even then, neither side will trust the other enough to resolve permanently the differences between the Kurds and Baghdad.

A further dangerous development from Saddam Hussein's point of view is that the Kurdish crisis has led the U.S. to link an end to sanctions — above all, the embargo on the sale of Iraqi crude — to his departure. Absence of oil revenues remains the most serious continuing pressure on the regime.

But supposing Saddam does go, who and what will replace him? The rebellions in March, and the savagery of the government response, show how fissiparous Iraqi politics are. Worse, the Shi'ite and Kurdish rebels were unable to co-ordinate their uprisings. Saddam Hussein him-

self has justified his authoritarian regime in the past by saying the country would fall apart without him — a classic justification of dictators, to which the obvious response is that the country appears to have fallen apart with him. Indeed, by employing Kurdish and Sunni Muslim troops against the Shi'ite, and vice versa, the government exacerbate ethnic tensions. With or without the Baath Party, Iraq is likely to remain unstable.

Beyond Iraq and Kuwait's borders the war decided surprisingly little. Despite the visits of James Baker, the U.S. secretary of state, to the Middle East, Israel and the Arab states remain far apart. The Palestine Liberation Organisation may be weakened by its support of Iraq, but it will not disappear. Given Palestinian longing for a real change in the balance of power in the Middle East, Yasser Arafat had little choice but to back Saddam Hussein. This may have damaged him with Saudi Arabia and its allies, but not among his bedrock supporters.

In some ways the course of allied involvement in the region since the ground war resembles Israeli and U.S. involvement in Lebanon in 1982 to 1984; a first easy victory followed by endless complications. The good news for any foreign army in the Arab World is that state structures are weak and their armies crumble easily. The bad news is that the very weakness of Arab govern-

ments means their military defeat is less decisive than that of a state in control of its society.

But the quagmire analogy can be overdone. There are real winners and losers in the Gulf crisis, even if the former did not gain all they expected. Iraq's defeat produced irreversible changes. The conquest of Kuwait was overturned. The Iraqi army, the largest and most experienced in the Arab World, cannot be rebuilt on its old scale. In the months between invading Kuwait and the ground war, Saddam Hussein had appealed to Arab and Islamic solidarity. There were demonstrations in his favour from Morocco to Yemen. His defeat has made it difficult for anyone else in the region to make a similar appeal.

In the Gulf, the two chief military powers, Iran and Iraq, have now both suffered military defeat in the past three years. Neither is likely to want to fight a war in the foreseeable future. The Arab-Israeli war of 1973 and the start of the Iran-Iraq war in 1980 led to oil prices rising precipitously. The stoppage of oil exports from two major producers, Iraq and Kuwait, since last August has had only a limited impact on prices. In global terms, the stabilisation of oil prices around their present level clearly reduces the most significant impact of political changes in the Middle East.

The course of the Gulf crisis also marked a decisive development in world politics: the Soviet

Union played only a limited role in the last nine months, and that mainly in support of the U.S.

President Gorbachev's last minute initiative to get Iraq to withdraw was ineffectual. The Gulf crisis marked the moment when the Soviet Union lost its position as a superpower.

These are important long-term changes. But there is a further reason why the war in the Gulf was more conclusive than many expected. A key factor was Saddam Hussein himself. Under a less maladroit leader the allied victory might not only have been less conclusive, it might not have occurred at all.

Had Iraq unilaterally withdrawn from three-quarters of Kuwait last November, and promised to evacuate the rest in return for an international conference on the Middle East, it would have been very difficult for President Bush to persuade the U.N. Security Council, and his own public, to launch a war. In fact, the Iraqi leader ordered a withdrawal only hours before the ground offensive, in time to demoralise his troops, but too late to forestall the allied attack.

An important reason for the U.S. defeat in Lebanon in 1982 to 1984, and success in Kuwait in 1990 to 1991 is that in the former crisis the U.S. was up against Syria's President Assad, an estate judge of his own strength, while in the Gulf, Washington was aided by Saddam Hussein's miscalculations — The Independent.

U.S. shies from pushing democracy in Mideast

By Bernd Debusmann
Reuters

Washington — Despite its towering stature after the Gulf war, the United States is showing no enthusiasm for pushing democratic reforms in the Middle East.

In sharp contrast to other areas in the world, where Washington speaks up for democracy as a matter of routine, the Bush administration has taken pains not to offend its war allies by criticising their undemocratic systems.

"If ever there was a time to promote political openings (in Arab countries), it is now," said a European diplomat here. "The United States emerged as the pre-eminent

power in the Middle East after the war and it has more clout than ever before."

But Washington has been silent even on calls for democracy in vanquished Iraq.

NEWS ANALYSIS

While the Gulf war was not about democracy, the crushing defeat suffered by Iraq's army in Kuwait gave rise to hopes inside Iraq that its people would at last be given a say in running their country.

Instead, the Iraqi forces crushed widespread rebellions against the regime, killing thousands of opponents. U.S. forces in the Gulf stood by and Washington pointedly refrained from expressing any

preference for democratic government.

"This puts the U.S. in a peculiar situation," said Laurie Mylroie, a Harvard University scholar.

"All Iraqi parties speak of democracy. The opposition demands it. Saddam Hussein now promises it, significant elements of the situation desire it but the U.S. has nothing to say about it."

It has had nothing to say either, about the absence of representative government in the Arab countries that sided with the United States against Iraq. They included Syria, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and several other Gulf emirates.

The U.S. reluctance to help promote democracy in the Middle East in the wake of the Gulf war has been a sharp disappointment to pro-democracy forces in the Arab World. But foreign policy analysts say it is nothing new.

In the 1940s and 50s, there was a distinct anti-colonialist strain in American foreign policy — chiefly aimed against the British colonial presence in Egypt, Palestine and Iraq and the French presence in Syria, Lebanon and Algeria.

Once the colonial era ended, Washington extended strong support for autocracy and coexisted, often closely, with despots from one end of the Arab World to the other.

In the era of the cold war and the U.S.-Soviet conflict, such alliances were forged in the context of the American crusade against communism. Strategic interests took precedence over considerations of democracy or human rights.

But long before the cold war ended, the United States changed tack elsewhere in the world. In Latin America, for example, it began withdrawing support for right-wing dictators in the late 1970s. But the end of the 1980s, they had all gone.

U.S. policymakers pride themselves on having helped bring democracy to Latin America — as well as to Eastern Europe where communist governments fell one by one over the past few years.

Now, the Middle East is the only region barely touched by the democratic wave that has swept the rest of the world.

"U.S. policies on the Middle East have long been based on supporting dictatorships to maintain stability," Iraqi opposition leader Ahmed Chalabi said recently. "That still is the case."

Syrian elite buy champagne in hotbed of Lebanese militancy

By Haitham Haddadin
Reuters

SHTOURA, Lebanon — The discerning Syrian shopper buys caviar and champagne in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley, better known as a source of some of the world's choicest hashish, and hotbed of pro-Iranian militants.

This farming town on the main Beirut-Damascus highway seems an unlikely site for a luxury supermarket but Lebanese-American Nadim Ghazali had good grounds for selecting it.

He says 90 per cent of his customers come across the border from austere Syria. The biggest spenders are western diplomats and senior officials.

"I find everything I need here and it's a nice ride (from Damascus)," said a United Nations official who drives the 60 kilometres from the Syrian capital at least once a week.

"We offer the best selection," said Ghazali, 41, the proud co-

owner of the sleek supermarket which bears his name in a two-storey block on the edge of Shtoura, 45 kilometres east of Beirut.

Display cases offer a selection of goods as unusual in the Syrian-policed Bekaa as the customers they attract.

More than 40 brands of imported breakfast cereal line shelves in the massive food hall which offers prime rib steaks from the United States along with fine French cheeses and vintage champagne.

In the wood-lined electronics showroom, state-of-the-art laptop computers compete for space with \$5,000 46-inch screen televisions and high-tech compact disc systems.

"We can get you everything. We practically sell everything, except drugs," Ghazali's 40-year-old brother Fouad said with a laugh. The Bekaa grows hashish and opium and exports millions of dollars worth of illegal drugs each year.

Guerrilla groups ranging from Palestinians, Kurds and pro-Iranian militants to Japanese Maoists are based in the Bekaa. Security sources said last November that some of the 12 western hostages in Lebanon had been secretly transferred there from Beirut's suburbs.

On one day this management described as average, a dozen Mercedes, BMWs and Range Rovers stood in the supermarket's parking lot. Ten carried Syrian licence plates, including two with diplomatic plates.

Three Syrian bodyguards with pistols at their sides escorted a nephew of Syrian President Hafez Al Assad down an aisle.

Most customers at Ghazali's are uneasy talking about their cross-border shopping expeditions.

Syrians need permits to export foreign currency. Asked if his clients faced problems with the Syrian customs, Ghazali replied:

"If you are important, there is no problem."

Witnesses said either Syrian border officers look the other way or the shoppers drive through unstoppped on a special army road over the border used by Syrian officials and army officers.

Cars with diplomatic licence plates are not searched.

Ghazali said the present best-sellers in the Bekaa were costly satellite television systems and video recorders.

Prices are marked in dollars but the supermarket also accepts Lebanese pounds.

Customers are evasive about their reasons for shopping at Ghazali's rather than in Syria, where most of the supermarket's electronic equipment is either unavailable or several times the price.

"Lebanon is a nice country. I take advantage of the holiday to come here to shop," said an Argentine diplomat, pushing a

half-full cart in the supermarket which opened four years ago.

A Syrian woman, who declined to be named, said she came to Shtoura between once and twice a month on holiday. "The variety here is no different from Damascus shops," she said defensively.

Ghazali, however, knows that his inventory is the best.

"I don't think anyone in the region has the selection and variety we carry," he said. He added that his business was worth several million dollars but declined to give an exact figure.

Ghazali said one of his supermarket's services was to locate free of charge anything his customers wanted to buy — including luxury cars. "In Lebanon everything is easy," he said.

The five Ghazali brothers own four supermarkets in Michigan in the United States and plan to expand their Lebanese business.

"Next year I will make more money than this year," forecast Ghazali.



Dome of the Rock: Celebrating a troubled thirteenth century

By Alistair Duncan

The following article is reprinted from the London-based New Horizon magazine.

This year celebrates the thirteenth century of the completion of the Dome of the Rock (Qubbat Al Sakhra) in Jerusalem.

Thereafter, Jerusalem became the first qibla of Islam, until a later revelation reordered the direction of prayer towards Makkah.

The Dome of the Rock was built by Caliph Abd Al Malik Ibn Marwan between 685 and 691. The octagonal building is of typically Byzantine design.

A metal dome (initially of gilded lead) crowns walls covered with patterns of ceramic tiles and panels of veined marble.

Inside, the ceilings of the ambulatories are of wood and plaster relief, supported by classical columns, tie-beams and pillars in multi-coloured splendour.

The walls are marble-sheathed, and the mosaic covered drum and supporting archways glow in the dim light. The central rough-hewn rock lies in stark contrast to the ecstatic man made splendour around it.

In Jewish and Christian tradition, it is built around the Rock upon which Abraham prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac, until prevented from so doing by Divine intervention.

In Muslim tradition, a different but similar event is believed to have taken place between Abraham and his eldest son, Ismael, away to the south in Arabia, where afterwards the patriarchal founder of the three great monotheistic religions and his son rebuilt the Ka'bah, originally founded by Adam.

The prime significance of the Rock to Muslims is the belief that it was from this point on earth that the Prophet Mohammad (p.b.u.h) ascended to heaven in his miraj and after praying with the other Prophets and receiving Divine instructions for mankind, completed his miraculous Night Journey by returning to Makkah Al Burak before dawn.

Kennedy raised no objection to the building of the Berlin Wall, seeing it as a way of avoiding a nuclear confrontation that could have ensued if Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev had attempted, instead, to seize control of all Berlin.

Kennedy privately told advisers he wished he had never warned Khrushchev against putting missiles into Cuba, the event that touched off a 13-day crisis that brought the world close to nuclear war.

If he had not, Kennedy said, he would have been able to avoid the crisis by simply telling the American people that the Soviet missiles were of little consequence. "Last month, I should have said, 'that we don't care,'" Kennedy said.

Nearly a hundred feet above, the wooden interior dome shimmers in a web of gold and scarlet arabesques. Panels record reconstruction work by the Sultan Muhammad Ibn Qalawoon and the renowned Salah ed Din, and its apex is the Koranic quotation: "God, there is no God but He, the living, the Everlasting. Slumber seizes him not, neither sleep; to Him belongs all that is in the

heavens and the Earth."

Today, The Dome of the Rock stands at the centre of the Haram enclosure in magnificent isolation: an isolation which symbolises the status of Muslims caught up in the turmoil of Arab-Israeli politics. Although devout Jews are discouraged from entering the area, which is believed to have once contained Solomon's and Herod's temples, no such religious inhibition applies to Zionist extremists or police and military personnel seeking to disperse Muslims who demonstrate against injustices which successive UN resolutions have done nothing to correct.

Such is the tragedy, made inevitable by those who use spiritual evocation for material gain, that the indigenous people, whose religion honours and respects the Prophets, from Adam to Jesus, as well as last and Seal of all the Prophets who revealed God's purpose in Makkah and Medina, find themselves aliens in their own land, with all that that entails.

Without world-wide acknowledgement that the validity of the holiness of Jerusalem — exemplified here by the Dome of the Rock — applies equally to all the adherents of the three Abrahamic traditions, Jews, Christians and Muslims alike, no lasting peace in this region will be possible.

Book says love affairs could have precluded or ended JFK's presidency

By Mike Feinsilber
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — As a 24-year-old naval intelligence officer and as president, John F. Kennedy had love affairs with women thought by the FBI to be spies, says a new book.

The author contends that the liaisons, if revealed at the time, could have kept Kennedy from becoming president or caused his impeachment.

Historian Michael A. Beschloss says he found a letter in FBI files that the youthful Kennedy wrote Swedish beauty Inga Arvad Fejos that showed he was aware of rumours she was a spy for Nazi Germany at the time he was involved with her.

"I've returned from an interesting trip, about which I won't bore you with the details, as if you are a spy I shouldn't tell you, and if you (sic) not you won't be interested," Kennedy wrote. "But I missed you."

At the time, seven months after Pearl Harbor, Kennedy was an officer in naval intelligence and the affair almost caused him to be cashiered from the service, Beschloss writes in *The Crisis Years: Kennedy and Khrushchev, 1960-63*, to be published next month by HarperCollins.

Kennedy's father, Joseph, used his influence to have his son instead transferred to a PT boat in the Pacific, the book says. JFK is quoted as having told a friend, "they shipped my ass out of town to break us up."

FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover later told an aide he regretted having told Kennedy's father of the affair because if Kennedy had not commanded PT-109 he would never have become president.

Kennedy gained fame during World War II for his role in command of the patrol-torpedo boat in the Solomon Islands. After the boat was rammed by a Japanese warship, Kennedy towed a badly wounded sailor to safety. American forces later rescued the crew.

Ms. Fejos, a tall, blond former Miss Denmark, was a suspected Nazi sympathiser and had been photographed at the 1936 Olympics sitting with Adolf Hitler, the book says.

It says the FBI was keeping her under surveillance on orders of President Franklin Roosevelt's attorney general.

The FBI files included this entry: "On Feb. 6, 1942, she visited Kennedy in Charleston, South Carolina, the two spending three nights together in the same hotel

room and engaging in sexual relations on numerous occasions."

The book says another affair occurred in the summer of 1963, during Kennedy's presidency, and involved Ellen Fimmel Rometsch, the 27-year-old wife of a West German airman, the book says.

She worked as a hostess in a private Capitol Hill club run by Bobby Baker, a powerful friend of senators. She was a member of two Communist Party organisations before fleeing from East to West Germany, her husband was attached to the West German military mission here.

She talked a lot, the book says, and when Kennedy's brother, Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, learned of the affair and heard she was boasting of her conquests among the powerful, including President Kennedy, he ordered her expulsions from the country.

Beschloss, 36, is the author of two previous books, one on Joseph Kennedy's relationship

with Roosevelt and one on Dwight Eisenhower and Khrushchev. He has held history appointments at Oxford University and Harvard's Russian Research Centre.

In an interview, Beschloss said the purpose of his book is to trace a crucial period of diplomacy but the affair raises questions about Kennedy's judgment.

"Kennedy knew that sexual compromise and blackmail was one of the oldest instruments of espionage," Beschloss wrote. "In the America of the early 1960s, if the president was shown to have slept with a woman not his wife, his political career would have been gravely damaged. If that woman was shown to be connected in some important way with a Soviet bloc government, he would have almost surely been thrown out of office."

If President Kennedy had been forced to resign because of the affair, Beschloss wrote, the course of history would have changed. Right wingers might

have created a climate under which no president could press for better relations with the Soviets.

The secret service knew of Kennedy's escapades but kept quiet, as did Dean Rusk, who in an interview told Beschloss that he was Kennedy's secretary of state, "not his chaplaine."

The Rometsch episode is not the only Kennedy affair to be detailed since his assassination in 1963. His affair with Judith Campbell, girlfriend of Mafia figure Sam Giancana, has been heavily publicised.

Kennedy "enjoyed defying the rules and getting away with it," Beschloss wrote. Of his relations with women, the president is quoted as having told a friend, "they can't touch me while I'm alive. And after I'm dead, who cares?"

Kennedy's sex life occupied only a few of the book's pages, most of which concern the international crises during his presidency. On those matters, the book asserts:

Kennedy raised no objection to the building of the Berlin Wall, seeing it as a way of avoiding a nuclear confrontation that could have ensued if Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev had attempted, instead, to seize control of all Berlin.

Kennedy privately told advisers he wished he had never warned Khrushchev against putting missiles into Cuba, the event that touched off a 13-day crisis that brought the world close to nuclear war.

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Jordan Times
Tel: 667171

Asmara fall to rebels

(Continued from page 1)

drought victims.

In a morning broadcast, the Tigrean's Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front called on the government to seek Mengistu's extradition to face trial in Ethiopia.

Mengistu ruled this impoverished Horn of African nation of 51 million with a brutal ruthlessness for 17 years after he and a group of army officers seized control in 1974, overthrowing Emperor Haile Selassie.

The Tigrean rebels have been fighting since 1975 for Mengistu's

oust. They hope the peace talks will result in a new, broad-based interim government as a prelude to free elections and a multiparty system.

The Eritrean insurgents seek a referendum on independence for Eritrea, a former Italian colony. They have been fighting since 1961 in Africa's longest war.

Pravda warns West

(Continued from page 1)

been largely inconclusive.

President Mikhail Gorbachev this week hinted that Moscow might be looking for about \$100

billion in foreign aid but also made clear he would accept no linkage between such aid and domestic reforms.

The Soviet leader is trying to

work out a deal to attract Western credits and investment and wants the leaders of the seven leading industrialised nations to invite him to their economic summit in London in July.

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DAILY PIANO ENTERTAINMENT

Edberg injured in Duesseldorf; may not play at French Open

DUESSELDORF (Agencies) — Stefan Edberg, the world's top-ranked tennis player, might not be able to play at the French Open next week.

Edberg, 25, injured himself Thursday during a training session in Duesseldorf, where he was taking part in the \$1.3-million Peugeot World Team Cup Tournament this week.

Tournament masseur Gerd Zilger was called onto centre court Friday during the first set while Edberg played against Andrei Cherkasov of the Soviet Union.

Edberg at first appeared to be okay, but by the end of the set, which Cherkasov won 6-4, he appeared to have lost some mobility.

When he started the second set it was apparent that Edberg was ailing. By the end of the set Edberg, which he lost 6-4, had difficulty serving and running.

Immediately after the match, tournament officials said that Edberg had suffered a strained thigh muscle, but that it did not appear to be serious.

Edberg, who is seeded number one for the French Open next week, left the stadium immediately to consult a doctor.

Gustafsson came back to win the second singles match to put the Swedish team in the final of the Duesseldorf tournament Sunday, but Edberg's injury puts the final in doubt.

With Sweden's other team member Jonas Svensson out with a back injury, Edberg's ailment forced the Swedes to forfeit the doubles match to the Soviets Friday.

Gustafsson said in a television interview after his match that Edberg had noticed some pain

during practice Thursday, when the Swedish team had a day off.

But Gustafsson said "I spoke with Stefan after his singles and I don't think it's a serious thing."

Agassi optimistic

Meanwhile, Andre Agassi, the controversial American, is determined to make the change from down to champion and has set his sights on the French Open title.

Agassi, adored by his teenage fans and frowned on by officials, lost a four-set final last year to Ecuador's Andres Gomez.

He went on to win the year-ending ATP World Championship, but above all Agassi longs to win his first Grand Slam tennis title.

The two-week French Open, starting Monday, is his best hope.

"I'm ready," said Agassi who arrived in Paris in mid-week, instead of flying in at the last minute as he did last year.

"Things are better this year. I've played more tournaments and I got here well in advance."

Agassi, 21, has won only one title this year, in the Orlando Hardcourt Tournament in Florida in April.

He made early exits at Monte Carlo and the Italian Open and admits he needs a bit of time to settle down on clay.

"If I get through the first two rounds here, if I begin to play the ball well, I'll get my confidence and I think then I'll have a good chance of going all the way," Agassi said.

The first round brings Agassi up against Switzerland's Marc Rosset but he could run into trouble later on with clay-court



Stefan Edberg

specialist Alberto Mancini of Argentina and fast-rising Yugoslav Goran Prpic in his section of the draw.

Though he was ranked third in the world at the end of 1988, Agassi admits he does not have the dedication to get to number one.

"Tennis is only a part of my life," he said. "To go higher in the rankings I would have to invest a great deal more in it than I do at the moment."

Agassi has always entertained the crowd with his clowning, as much as his powerful game.

But officials have not always smiled so benignly on the long-haired Las Vegas man.

He was fined \$25,000 by the International Tennis Federation (ITF) for breaking an agreement to play in the Grand Slam Cup last year after loudly and publicly criticising the huge amount of prize money — \$6 million — involved.

Agassi is well remembered at Roland Garros for his comment last year after Philippe Chatrier, the sober-suited president of the ITF, criticised the fluorescent pink leggings the American wore

on court.

"Chatrier, he's a bozo," said Agassi.

But compatriot John McEnroe, for one, believes Agassi is growing up fast and is ready to win a Grand Slam title.

"In the last few months he's changed," said 15th seeded McEnroe who is in the opposite half of the draw to Agassi.

"He's put on muscle, he's improved his service, he's matured. He has enormous potential still."

Champion or not, Agassi is bound to make his mark in Paris again over the next two weeks.

And should Chatrier care, the American was unveiling a new French Open outfit at an exhibition match this weekend. Insiders said it is an eye-catching shade of violet.

Burrell to test his speed at 200 metres

SAN JOSE, California (R) — Leroy Burrell, wanting to test his readiness for future showdowns with countryman Michael Johnson, runs his first 200 metres of the season Saturday at Bruce Jenner's Classic here.

The meeting, the second of 19 on this year's Grand Prix circuit, also features 1988 Olympic 400 metres champion Steve Lewis and Olympic double gold medalist Jackie Joyner-Kersey.

U.S. long jumper Mike Powell, German discus thrower Wolfgang Schmidt and women's shot-putter Astrid Kumbernuss and U.S. women's 3,000-metre runner Patsie Plumer — all ranked number one in their events last year — also are competing.

Britons Steve Cram and Gary Staines will challenge America's best at 3,000 metres.

Burrell, the world's fastest at 100 metres for two successive years, should dominate the 200-metre field, which includes world junior champion Aleksandr Goremykin of the Soviet Union and former U.S. university champion Lorenzo Daniel.

"He's in good shape, but I want him to run a decent 200," before next month's U.S. championships. Tom Tellez, who coaches both Burrell and six-time Olympic champion Carl Lewis, told Reuters.

Burrell ran the 200 infrequently last year, but he sped to a wind-aided clocking of 19.61 seconds last May to hand Johnson, last year's top-ranked 200 and 400 metre runner, his only defeat of the season.

The two are expected to battle for 200-metre honours at next month's U.S. championships and again at the World Championships in August.

Cannes qualify for UEFA Cup

PARIS (R) — Cannes qualified for their first European club competition when they finished fourth in the French Soccer League after Friday's final matches.

Cannes drew 0-0 at Montpellier to secure the third place allotted to French clubs in next season's UEFA Cup.

They may yet be joined by Lyon, who have not played in

Europe for 15 years but who finished fifth thanks to a 1-0 victory over relegated Bordeaux.

Marseille secured a third consecutive title last week and second-placed Monaco and third-placed Auxerre made certain of a UEFA Cup spot some time ago.

But an expected French Cup final between Marseille and Monaco, who play semifinals

against second division Rodez and Gueugnon next week, would mean Monaco playing in the Cup Winners' Cup and Lyon would take their UEFA berth.

The French League confirmed Friday that Bordeaux, who finished 11th in their 29th season in the first division, would be relegated to the second, after going into receivership.

Kaiserslautern stretches lead

BONN (R) — Captain Stefan Kuntz scored twice as Kaiserslautern overpowered lowly Bochum 4-1 to go four points clear at the top of the German Bundesliga Friday.

The south-west club, almost

relegated last season, stretched their unbeaten run to 13 matches with three games left.

Second-placed Bayern Munich, who have a game in hand, will need to secure both points just to stay in touch when they meet relegation-threatened Hertha Berlin in Munich Saturday.

Two Kaiserslautern players picked up what could be very serious injuries.

Czechoslovak World Cup defender Miroslav Kadlec was taken to hospital in the first half with a suspected knee ligament injury, and in the second half defender Reinhard Stumpf was carried off with a head injury.

"I can't celebrate this win," said coach Karlheinz Feldkamp. "Kadlec has probably torn ligaments and stump has maybe fractured his cheek bone. You can't put things like that aside."

Kaiserslautern, unbeaten at home this season, went behind early on when Dirk Helmig headed a goal for the relegation-threatened visitors in the 16th minute.

But striker Kuntz headed an equaliser in the 35th minute. Dane Bjarne Goldbaek made it 2-1 just before half time and then Uwe Scherr struck in the 61st. Kuntz went on to score his 99th league goal five minutes later.

Becker beats Sampras

EDE, Netherlands (R) — World number two Boris Becker completed his preparations for next week's French Open by beating American Pete Sampras 6-4 1-6 7-5 in the final of a clay-court invitation tournament Saturday.

Becker, who withdrew from last week's Italian Open with a back injury, looked comfortable enough as he won the first set. He promptly lost the second and was 4-2 down in the third before recovering.

The result should give Becker some encouragement before his tough first round match in Paris against Spanish clay court specialist Jordi Arrese.

"It couldn't be more difficult," Becker was reported as saying after learning of the French Open first round draw.

If he succeeds in Paris, it will be Becker's first major title on clay.

Maradona 'is addicted' to cocaine

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (AP) — A federal judge has received a medical report indicating that soccer superstar Diego Maradona "is physically addicted" to cocaine, a national news agency has said.

The agency, Diarios Y Noticias, cited court sources as saying however, that drug possession and distribution charges pending against Maradona could be dismissed if he successfully undergoes a court-approved drug treatment programme.

Maradona's manager, Marcos Franchi has said that the soccer star began medical and psychological treatment shortly after he and two friends were arrested in an April 26 police raid on a Buenos Aires apartment.

Franchi also has said that Maradona, free on \$20,000 bond, admitted to authorities that he used cocaine "on several occasions" for three months prior to his arrest.

Maradona, former captain of Napoli of the Italian League, was suspended by the league on April

6 after traces of cocaine were found in a urine test following a game between Napoli and Bari.

The medical report, the result of blood and urine tests as well as examination of Maradona's nasal passages, was delivered to federal judge Amelia Berraz De Vidal by forensic examiners, Diarios Y Noticias said.

The tests established that Maradona "is addicted to cocaine" but failed to determine the degree of dependency, court sources were quoted as saying.

The agency cited the sources as saying that judge Berraz could drop charges against Maradona if he successfully undergoes treatment at a clinic specialising in treating addiction.

The law permits the courts to take such action in cases in which the addict agrees to rehabilitation in court-approved facilities that can be proposed by his family.

If no results are obtained after two years and the accused fails to cooperate, he can be tried and sentenced on the original charges.

Conviction for possession of drugs for personal use carries a minimum sentence of from one month to two years in jail. Conviction for distribution of drugs can be penalised by up to 12 years in jail.

An important factor in determining the sentence is the amount of drugs found on the accused when arrested. Officials have not revealed how much cocaine was found, although published reports have said the amount did not exceed five grammes.

Court sources reported earlier that a plastic bag tossed out a window of the apartment at the time of the arrest contained 91 per cent pure cocaine.

Maradona, former captain of Argentina's national team, has spent most of his time since being freed on bond in the seclusion of his suburban home.

Franchi has said Maradona spends his time with his family and friends, leaving the apartment daily to jog between 7 and 8 kilometres in a nearby park.

SPORTS NEWS IN BRIEF

No accord yet on Gascoigne — Lazio

ROME (R) — Lazio have not signed an agreement on the transfer of Tottenham and England midfielder Paul Gascoigne, the Rome club's general manager said Saturday. "We have not signed any accord on the transfer," Carlo Regalia said here after visiting Tottenham. "Things are going well but we need a little time yet. "I'm sure we will soon have a solution because talks have reached an advanced stage and we remain optimistic." The Italian News Agency (ANSA) said Friday that Lazio had agreed a deal under which Gascoigne would formally remain the property of the English club until next season but would probably move to Rome this summer. Gascoigne's projected \$14.5 million transfer seemed to have fallen through after he underwent surgery for a badly damaged knee ligament last Sunday. Lazio expect him to remain out of action for as long as nine months.

Soviets edge Australia in basketball

CANBERRA (AP) — Natalia Zassoulskaia scored 21 points Friday night as the Soviet Union edged Australia 70-68 in a four-nation International Women's Basketball Tournament. The win improved the Soviet's record to 3-0 in the round-robin tournament. Australia led 50-40 at halftime and the Soviets did not take the lead until 34 seconds from the end of the game. Shelley Gorman scored 18 points for Australia, which fell to 1-2.

Benevides takes WBO boxing title

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas (R) — Jesse Benevides of the United States won the World Boxing Organisation (WBO) junior featherweight title from Mexican Orlando Fernandez by taking a unanimous 12-round points decision.

Top seeds bow out in Strasbourg Open

STRASBOURG (AP) — The three remaining seeds, including No. 1 Judith Wiesner, were eliminated Friday in the quarterfinals of the \$150,000 Strasbourg Open Women's Tennis Tournament. Rachel McQuillan of Australia defeated the Austrian Wiesner 6-4, 7-6 (7-3). No. 2 seed Lori McNeil of the United States fell to Anne Minter of Australia, 6-1, 7-6 (7-5), and fourth-seeded Laura Gildemeister of Peru bowed to Radka Zrubakovska of Czechoslovakia, 6-0, 6-3. In the other quarterfinal, Naoko Sawamatsu of Japan beat Claudia Kohde-Kilsch of Germany 6-3, 6-1.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
A YANNAH HIRSCH
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TAKEN TO THE CLEANERS

Neither vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH
♠ Q 8 4
♥ K 6 5
♦ A K Q 3
♣ A 6 2

WEST
♠ 7 3
♥ A Q 9 4
♦ 8 6 5
♣ J 9 5 3

EAST
♠ J 10 6
♥ J 8 3
♦ J 10 7 4 2
♣ Q 8

SOUTH
♠ A K 9 5 2
♥ 10 7 2
♦ 9
♣ K 10 7 4

The bidding:
North East South West
1 NT Pass 2 ♠ Pass
2 ♦ Pass 3 ♠ Pass
4 ♠ Pass Pass Pass

Opening lead: ♠
Once in a while you can take advantage of the bidding to do something extraordinary that, if circumstances are right, could produce a sensational result. For example, study this diagram and see if you can discover how declarer came to only nine tricks at his four-spade contract when it would seem that with the ace of hearts outside and trumps breaking, 11 tricks were there for the taking.

South tried to make the stronger hand declarer by first using Stayman to see if North by any chance

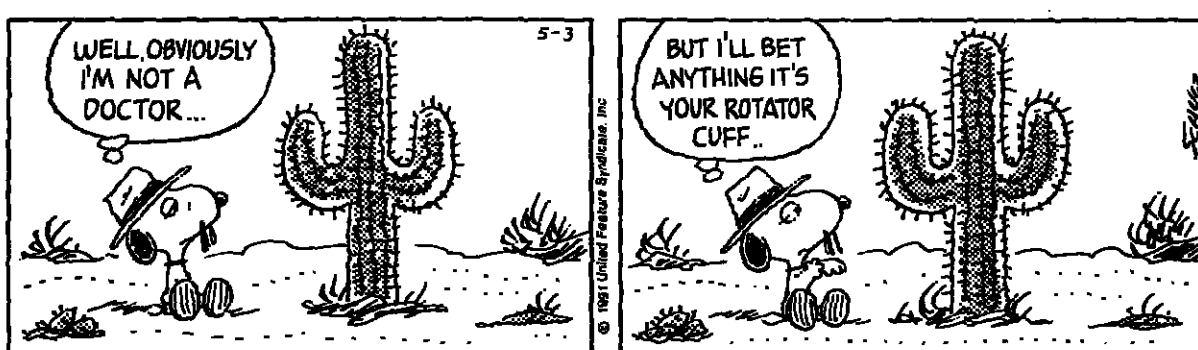
held four spades. When North denied a four-card major, South made a game-forcing jump in spades and North, with three-card support, raised.

West reasoned that, since North was the no-trump opener, the king of hearts was more likely to be in dummy than with declarer, so that defender made the deceptive opening lead of the queen of hearts. With the ten in hand, declarer made the normal play of ducking in dummy, then playing low again when West continued with the four. East was surprised that his jack won the trick, but not enough to fail to play a third round of the suit. West's ace completed the defensive book, and the 13th heart was now led. Declarer discarded a club from the table. East ruffed with the ten and declarer overruffed with the king.

Declarer was one of those thoughtful types. South came to the conclusion that the only reason West had defended so peculiarly was in the hope of promoting a trump honor. So declarer cashed the ace of trumps and then finessed the board's eight. This East scored a trick with each major-suit jack, and declarer's 11 tricks had shrunk to nine.

We'll let you in on a secret. Given such inspired defense, we'd probably have played the hand the same way!

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



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HOROSCOPE NOT RECEIVED

THE BETTER HALF. By Harris



JUMBLE. by Henri Arnold and Bob Lee

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

FIGER
YIKTT
NEBING
SLAQU

Yes, dear... you were right all along. I was just teasing you.

THE HARDEST THING TO GIVE---

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surliest answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: " " "

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: DAISY ROACH UNLOAD GOVERN
Answer: What did said he learned about the arrival of quadruplets—"4 CRYING OUT LOUD!"

THE Daily Crossword by William Canine

ACROSS
1 Leather band
6 Donut
10 Austen heroine
14 Got up
15 Strategem
16 Destiny
17 Pale purple
18 Burrowing mammal
20 Digit
21 Voucher
23 Very much
24 Mid town
25 Sashen
26 Arctic mammal
30 Pizarro's victims
34 Sockways
35 Warning
37 Stout
38 Gaudine
39 Playful mammal
41 Bridge
42 Kipling hero
43 Wood knot
44 Egypt god
46 Tangle
48 Bushy-tailed mammal
50 Paintings
52 Meadows
53 Crooner Vic
56 Kewpie
57 Ford's final VP
60 Desert
62 The Gen. State
64 Green Gables
66 Pleased
68 External
69 Time span
70 Trees
71 Hand up

DOWN
1 Season
2 Combo
3 Function
4 Sky — fox
5 Pardon
6 Land
7 Oscar winner
8 Dogma
9 Liberty

10 Phonograph
11 Enclave
12 — "Flinders"
13 Chin, seaport
19 Crooner Bobby
22 Valerie or Laura
24 Chin, money
25 Great Lake
26 Playgrounds
27 Fatty liquid
28 Andean
29 Houston pro
31 Bay of Naples tale
32 Actor Delon
33 Hearing s.g.
36 Fawn
40 Marbles
41 Gentleman
42 Actor Kevin
43 Aquatic mammal
47 Tenant
49 Famed London firm
51 Sheit

53 WWII date
54 Eng. composer
55 Helmond's TV tale
56 Tot

57 Loathe
58 Cast off
59 Conservative
60 Swooping
63 Owing

Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:

SHEDS REBA RETA
GOWRA ARAB TIAN
GAINES RICO BONE
GAINES RICO BONE
ASSIST ROGER
GOD GERO AYRAN
ROSIAM ROUSURE
ALORD DORN ATIA
BYRON FAIRN
CRADLE KEEN
GOSWAMIDORE
ACME BAGE UPLINE
GARR EVIL ADULT
KIRIS REAT URAISH

Economy

West's trade watchdog opens technology exports to East Bloc

PARIS (R) — The West's trade watchdog has vastly expanded the range of high-technology products that former Communist Bloc countries can import from Western nations, a U.S. official said Friday.

The Coordinating Committee on Multilateral Export Controls (Cocom) agreed at a high-level meeting Thursday to prune the list of items banned for export to eight general categories.

The new list, scheduled to come into force Sept. 1, replaces Cocom's previous list of 120 specific restricted goods.

"We agreed on a new core list of controls that I think meets well the objectives of building higher fences around fewer items," said Alan Wendt, head of the U.S. delegation to Cocom.

Speaking at a news conference on the Cocom meeting, he said controls on "truly strategic" goods would be strengthened. But trade would be freed in products needed to modernise the economies of former communist countries.

The new list of banned items includes electronic components, advanced materials, materials processing, telecommunications, sensors and lasers, navigation, avionics and aircraft technology.

marine technology, computers and propulsion systems.

Significant changes include the deregulation of some semiconductors and the equipment to make them, most civilian aircraft and most personal computers, workstations and mini-computers.

Other items that are too widely available to restrict, like machine tools, were also liberalised.

Strengthened export controls in Cocom's 17 member countries, which include Australia, Japan and all NATO members except Iceland, will be implemented from Jan. 1, 1992.

For 42 years Cocom has policed Western exports to stop technologies that could have military applications from reaching communist countries. It decided to ease restrictions last June in response to the fall of communist regimes in Eastern Europe.

But the Gulf war caused the United States to harden its original views, Wendt told reporters.

Fibre optic telecommunications cables in Iraq, for instance, proved immune to allied bombardment.

Because of this the Soviet Union will not be allowed to buy the fastest fibre optic transmission

systems. Cocom decided to limit Soviet telecommunications purchases to the level of U.S. systems of the early 1980s.

"No one is trying to keep the Soviet Union in the stone age with regard to telecommunications ... what the Soviet Union needs is good old-fashioned telephones," he said.

Controls on militarily useful night vision devices and thermal imaging equipment will remain in place after the Gulf war experience.

"Our delegation took a firm line on control for these items, taking into account what we learnt during the Gulf war of their role in combat and the deficiencies of their Soviet counterparts," he said.

Separately, Cocom also decided to reduce controls on some items for Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, particularly for telecommunications equipment. But it will not yet remove all restrictions on them.

Cocom's original aim to deregulate trade with the three remains. But it wants first to monitor recently enacted export controls in those countries to see that sensitive goods cannot be reexported to a prohibited destination, Wendt added.

Bahrain Middle East Bank reports \$38m loss

MANAMA, Bahrain (R) — Bahrain Middle East Bank E.C. (BMB), an offshore bank, said it lost \$38.3 million in 1990 after making provisions for bad debt and investments.

The Bahrain-based bank said loan-loss provisions were raised to \$27.7 million in 1990 from \$3.2 million the previous year. It has also allocated \$11.2 million for investment provisions.

The bank made virtually no operating income in 1990 compared with \$24.4 million in 1989. The Bahrain-based bank had a net profit of \$10.4 million in 1989.

BMB is owned by banks and

private investors in six Gulf Arab states — Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Oman. Kuwait's Burgan Bank is the main shareholder with a 28 per cent stake.

The bank said it had received approval from the central bank of Netherlands to establish a wholly owned subsidiary called European Universal Bank NV (EUB).

BMB also announced plans to form, or acquire, a separately capitalised bank in the United States with an authorised capital of \$50 million and a paid-in capital of \$20 million.

EC clinches 91-92 farm price deal

BRUSSELS (R) — European Community (EC) agriculture ministers have made a landmark decision to cap spending on costly farm subsidies, seeking to reform the EC's creaking farm system.

EC Farm Commissioner Ray MacSharry hailed the decision Friday as a major breakthrough. It emerged from a week of negotiations to freeze or cut the 12-nation bloc's farm prices for the year.

MacSharry said it would help and chronic overproduction, pave the way for reforming the EC's farm system, and help world trade talks.

"It's fantastic, it's a miracle in the circumstances," he told journalists on leaving the talks.

Italy was the only one of 12 delegations to vote against the package, wanting more assurances over cuts in milk quotas than MacSharry would give.

Most farm prices will either be frozen or cut. Cereals, beef and milk, all piling up in alarming quantities, get the toughest treatment.

"I pity the ministers, they don't have much to go home and sell, but it gives the right signals: Enemy number one is surplus stocks," MacSharry said.

The decision kept a spending limit of 32.5 billion European Currency Units (\$38 billion) for the season.

Earlier in the negotiations, ministers spent hours arguing that the subsidy limit should be waived this year because of the cost of integrating former East Germany into the Community's common agricultural policy (CAP) of farm subsidies.

Spending on the CAP takes up over half of all EC spending, and 80 per cent of the farm budget goes to 20 per cent of EC farmers, a ratio MacSharry has pledged to change.

Ministers finally accepted a painstaking compromise that attacks the most troublesome sectors.

Firstly, the so-called co-responsibility tax to pay for storing and disposing of surplus cereals is raised from three to five per cent. Milk quotas are to be cut by an overall two per cent this year and the buying-up of surplus beef is to be tightened.

EC bourses remain divided over electronic network link

ATHENS (R) — The future of a proposed electronic network linking European Community (EC) stock markets was in doubt Friday after EC bourse chiefs failed to agree what the system, called Euroquote, should do.

A statement issued after the bi-annual meeting of the Federation of Stock Exchanges in the EC said the plans for Euroquote needed some refinements.

But delegates said the carefully worded statement concealed deep splits over Euroquote and, underlying that, the shape of an integrated marketplace for securities trading in Europe.

Federation Chairman Boudevijn Van Iersum told a news conference Euroquote, a Belgium-registered company owned by the EC exchanges, had been asked to prepare a new business plan.

EC bourses will decide whether to go ahead in Brussels in July, he said.

"This meeting was to take stock of work under way," said Van Iersum, chairman of the Amsterdam Stock Exchange. "We found we need to refine (the Euroquote plans) before we can commit the funds," he said, without giving details.

A Paris Stock Exchange source said Euroquote had been asked to tone down the scope of the first phase of the project. "We are looking at something cheaper, less ambitious, better targeted to meet specific market needs," he said.

The first phase of Euroquote is to set up a company news and share price information system between EC exchanges.

A consortium headed by General Electric Information Systems (GEIS), a subsidiary of U.S.-based General Electric Co., has been chosen by Euroquote to build the network if the 15 million

European Currency Unit (\$18 million) plan is given the go-ahead.

In their phases, Euroquote hopes to develop the system into an automated share trading and settlement system between European bourses.

But several conference sources said it was difficult to see how a new business plan for Euroquote could help overcome some fundamental objections, especially from the German bourses and the London Stock Exchange.

They said London had reiterated that it would not pay for creating what, in its view, amounted to little more than a competitor to established commercial information vendors such as Swiss Telekurs or Reuters Holdings PLC.

"We can see little or no added value in Euroquote phase one as it stands right now," a London Stock Exchange source said.

Free trade fever grips Mexico

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Mexico greeted the U.S. Congress' Friday approval of free trade negotiations as the beginning of a new era in bilateral relations.

A trade pact with the United States is the centerpiece of President Carlos Salinas de Gortari's economic blueprint for his country's economic recovery and modernisation.

The government's preoccupation with the accord is reflected in the media, the vast majority of which toes the government line and covers the issue favourably.

Major newspapers have crammed their pages with free trade stories on a daily basis for months and Mexican television broadcast lengthy excerpts of the U.S. congressional debate Thursday and Friday.

At times it seems, free trade fever has infected every aspect of life.

"Fast track," an office worker was overheard muttering this week. "That's what I'm going to tell my girlfriend: Forget dinner and the movies, honey — let's get on the fast track."

The independent news magazine Proceso ran a picture of Lupita Jones, the Mexican who was crowned Miss Universe.

under a headline calling her Miss Free Trade.

The Institutional Revolutionary Party, which has ruled Mexico since 1929, said the congressional green light for U.S. President George Bush to conduct amendment-free negotiations showed confidence in Salinas and the country's ability to modernise.

It said "the possibility will be open to beginning a new stage in relations between Mexico and the United States. The authority conferred on the American (chief) executive implies an enormous challenge to the creativity, the capacity for organisation and the productivity of all sectors of Mexican society."

But there were also dissenting voices.

"The fast track to purgatory," Rodolfo Pena wrote in a column published Friday in the daily La Jornada, which airs opposition and leftist points of view.

Pena said the free trade accord would mean social, political, cultural and ethical changes in Mexico that would erode its national identity. He also said Mexico's foreign policy would become subservient to that of the

United States.

The conservative, business-oriented National Action Party, one of the two largest opposition parties, said Mexico should take a more cautious track in negotiations.

The National Action Party's president, Luis Alvarez, noted that Mexico recently unilaterally lowered its trade barriers, opening its markets quickly to imports after years of protectionism.

"That opening could have been negotiated. That wasn't done. We don't want the same thing to occur now with the discussions of the free trade agreement," he told the Excelsior news service.

Leftist parties oppose the agreement, saying Mexico will be at a disadvantage in competing with the more advanced economies of the United States and Canada.

The Democratic Revolutionary Party, the major leftist opposition, says that a quick agreement threatens Mexican sovereignty. Party spokesman Ricardo Pascoe told Excelsior the Mexican government is bowing to U.S. demands in secret backroom negotiations on issues like foreign investment laws.

Paris Club cuts Egypt's debt by half

CAIRO (R) — Western creditor nations agreed Saturday to cut their portion of Egypt's \$35 billion foreign debt by half, Egypt's national news agency MENA reported from Paris.

MENA quoted a statement by the creditors, known as the Paris Club, as saying 17 member nations agreed to cancel 30 per cent of the debt in two phases beginning July 1.

Another 20 per cent would be cancelled July 1, 1994, at which time the remaining debt would be rescheduled.

MENA quoted minister of state for cabinet affairs, Atef Obeid, as putting Egypt's total Paris Club debt at \$20.2 billion. He said the remaining 50 per cent of Paris Club debt would be rescheduled over 25 years.

Obeid said Egypt would receive a three-year grace period on the remaining 50 per cent, part of which creditor nations could convert to Egyptian currency to invest in local environmental, archaeological and job-creation projects.

MENA quoted Obeid as saying

agreement would soon be reached with individual nations for further debt writeoffs beyond the 50 per cent.

Western economists said the debt forgiveness was due largely to Egypt's strategic importance as a Gulf war ally.

The United States, which early this year cancelled around \$7 billion in Egyptian military debt, had been pressing its Western allies for a generous deal.

But many creditors resisted, arguing that Egypt was cash-rich from aid during the Gulf crisis and that other debtor countries had more pressing needs.

MENA said Paris Club negotiations that began Friday lasted 22 hours. The statement was issued at 5 a.m. Paris time (0300 GMT).

MENA listed the 17 creditor countries as Australia, Austria, Belgium, Britain, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, The Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States.

Australia's Labour government fights off 'banana republic' jibe

CANBERRA (R) — The Labour government has angrily denied opposition claims in parliament that its economic mismanagement had made Australia a "banana republic."

"The 'lucky country' is now a frustrated and angry country," said liberal leader John Hewson, reeling off a "misery index" of official data he said showed the country was in deep recession.

He taunted Labour with remarks, made exactly five years ago by Treasurer Paul Keating, that if fundamental problems were not dealt with Australia could become a "banana republic," a euphemism for a poor nation with an economy running out of control.

Hewson cited on unemployment rate of 9.9 per cent at the end of April, a net foreign debt of 130 billion dollars (\$101 billion) and a projected annual current account deficit of 18 billion dollars (\$12 billion).

In fiery exchanges, Keating said he conceded that Labour, running behind the opposition in public opinion polls, had problems largely because it raised official interest rates to 18 per cent in the second half of 1989 to quell domestic demand.

The monetary squeeze drove Australia into a recession and has recently led to a growth in unemployment.

But Keating said official rates had now been cut six times in the past 18 months and that inflation was falling.

Official interest rates are now 12.1 per cent and the annual inflation rate to the end of December is 6.9 per cent, against 7.8 per cent at the end of December 1989.

Australia's trading position, thanks to recent growth in exports and slumping imports, had



substantially improved in recent months, Keating said.

He said Australia was now running a budget surplus. The surplus forecast for the year to the end of June this year is 1.7 billion dollars (\$1.3 billion) against a surplus of 8.1 billion (\$6.3 billion) in 1989/90.

Australia had made structural adjustments and had bright prospects in the 1990s, with export volumes growing, debt stabilised, inflation low and investment high, Keating said.

"It is game, set and match for Australia," he said.

On the subject of an election, due by March 1993, he said: "Frankly, the only difficulty for the government is being around long enough to see it. That's all."

Amid laughter from the opposition, Keating added: "Not that it (Labour's reelection) doesn't happen. We recognise the economic and political difficulties we are in."

"Australia will be a low inflation and productive country with a huge merchandise trade surplus right through the 1990s. As sure as I stand here," Keating added.

Bankruptcies soar in Canada

OTTAWA (R) — Bankruptcies in Canada soared 77 per cent in April over the same month last year as a slump in consumer spending hit the retail sector.

The government reported Friday that bankruptcies reached 6,671 from 3,765 a year earlier and the number of business failures was the highest since Canada's recession began a year ago.

"A lot of businesses hanging on ran out of time," said Tim Whitehead, a Canadian Imperial Bank

of Commerce economist.

"Consumers are still facing a heavy debt load and are not spending, so retailers are still facing a long tough sled."

The consumer and corporate affairs department said 5,559 consumers and 1,112 businesses went bankrupt in April.

Unemployment now stands at 10.2 per cent compared with 7.3 per cent a year ago and incomes and consumer spending have suffered. Financial analysts said the

introduction of a new seven per cent consumption tax also hit the retail sector.

"The recession has accelerated a basic shift in consumer values," said John Williams, president of Toronto-based retail consultants John C. Williams Consultants Ltd.

"The 1980s was a time of flaunting it if you've got it. But the consumer has matured and as we go into the '90s, if you've got it, you save it," he said.

Tiniest U.S. stock exchange quietly closes doors for good

SPOKANE, Washington (R) — The Spokane Stock Exchange, which has traded mining issues since 1897 and has long been America's tiniest formal equities market, quietly closed its doors for good Friday.

Low silver prices and the U.S. recession finally forced the struggling six-member exchange out of business, said Preston Macy, the exchange's compliance officer.

"Everybody just threw up their hands and said 'that's it,'" Macy told Reuters in an interview after the exchange's final close of trading. "I'm the only one here now. No one even wanted to come over for the funeral."

The exchange primarily traded penny stocks issued by companies mining gold and silver from the mountains of Idaho and British Columbia, in Canada, Macy said.

There were 45 stocks traded on the exchange, whose membership has halved over the last year.

"It was busy in the early years, in the 20s, even the 30s and again in the late 60s when the Hunt Brothers were investing in gold and prices went up. There was a lot of excitement in those days," Macy said.

In recent years, however, volume on the exchange proved too low to cover the cost of new electronic systems required for modern trading. "There just wasn't enough volume to make it pay, so that money had to come out of the members' hide," Macy said.

Recent trading volume on the exchange, which traded for four hours a day, had averaged 28,000 shares a day.

RJR Nabisco reports profits of \$5 million

NEW YORK (R) — U.S. tobacco and food giant RJR Nabisco Holdings Corp has reported earnings of \$5 million for the first quarter, its first profitable period since being taken private two years ago in the largest leveraged buyout ever.

In last year's first quarter, RJR lost \$222 million.

The company took on massive debt when it was bought in 1989 by leveraged buyout specialists Kohlberg Kravis Roberts Co. for a record \$25 billion.

Sales in this year's period were \$3.47 billion, up eight per cent from \$3.20 billion a year ago.

The company has received high marks on Wall Street for using its bountiful cash flow to pare debt taken on in the buyout, and it recently issued stock and new bonds in issues that were snapped up by investors.

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ANNOUNCEMENT
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| Financial Markets | | |
|---|--------|--------|
| in co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank | | |
| Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin | | |
| Date: 23/5/1991 | | |
| Currency | Bid | Offer |
| U.S. Dollar | .681 | .683 |
| Sterling Pound | 1.1725 | 1.784 |
| Deutsche Mark | .3937 | .3957 |
| Swiss Franc | .4646 | .4669 |
| French Franc | .1161 | .1167 |
| Japanese Yen | .4925 | .4950 |
| Dutch Guilder | .3498 | .3515 |
| Swedish Krona | .1099 | .1104 |
| Italian Lira | .0531 | .0534 |
| Belgian Franc | .01921 | .01931 |
| Other Currencies | | |
| Date: 23/5/1991 | | |
| Currency | Bid | Offer |
| Bahraini Dinar | 1.7350 | 1.7450 |
| Lebanese Lira | .074 | .076 |
| Saudi Riyal | .1810 | .1819 |
| Kuwaiti Dinar | - | - |
| Qatari Riyal | .1822 | .1840 |
| Egyptian Pound | .1950 | .2100 |
| Omani Riyal | 1.7200 | 1.7350 |
| UAE Dirham | .1829 | .1840 |
| Greek Drachma | .3600 | .3700 |
| Cypriot Pound | 1.4250 | 1.4450 |

Cinema Tel: 677420
CONCORD
Nick Nolte & Martin Short in
THREE FUGITIVES
Show: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.

Cinema Tel: 634144
PHILADELPHIA
HER ALIBI
Show: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.

Cinema Tel: 675571
NIJOM
LAMBADA
Show: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.

Cinema Tel: 625155
RAINBOW
Laila Alawi in
THE INTOXICATED
Arabic
Show: 30:30, 6:30, 8:30 p.m.

Congress Party tries again to convince Sonia Gandhi to lead

NEW DELHI (R) — Assassinated Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's Congress Party has put off choosing a new leader in hopes of persuading his Italian-born widow to take the job, senior party officials said Saturday.

They said an appeal would be made to Sonia Gandhi, 44, to reconsider her refusal to lead Congress in the delayed remaining phases of general elections after its top body unanimously elected her to the post of president.

"Without her, I might as well quit politics. She is the only one who can keep the party together. Anyone else would split the party into factions, with each leader having five supporters," said a dismayed Congress leader from the younger generation.

Party leaders had scheduled a meeting for Saturday to decide on what to do, but postponed it until she had been asked again.

Sonia Gandhi, known to dislike politics, but who played the dutiful political wife, firmly rejected the post of Congress president Thursday and threw the party into turmoil.

Its leaders were not hopeful that she would change her mind.

"If she was going to change her mind, she would have done it already," one said. "We just don't want to give India the impression that she has not been given a fair chance. There is a lot of emotion on the subject."

Gandhi's assassination ended the hold of the Nehru Dynasty on the Congress Party unless Sonia Gandhi agreed to extend it.

Jawaharlal Nehru, independent India's first prime minister, his daughter Indira Gandhi and her son Rajiv Gandhi ruled India for all but five years since independence in 1947.

The young leader, who asked not to be identified, said only

Sonia Gandhi could help Congress capitalise on the wave of sympathy for her husband.

She would also hold it together by preventing factional quarrels ahead of the remaining 60 per cent of voting in the election, postponed because of Gandhi's murder to June 12 and 15.

The first phase of the election, split to enable security forces to be moved around the country in anticipation of violence, was held last Monday, a day before Gandhi was blown up by a woman suicide bomber in the southern state of Tamil Nadu.

The right-wing Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), tipped by opinion polls to finish just behind Congress, is now attempting to take over Gandhi's own slogan promising stability to a country torn by insurgencies, caste and religious violence.

BJP leaders now deride Congress without Gandhi, saying it cannot even promise its own stability.

Any bickering over the party leadership will only help the BJP campaign.

But no single leader in the Congress commands the support of even a substantial section of the party.

Two of the three politicians tipped for the post, if Sonia Gandhi maintains her refusal, are elderly men from the generation that came into public life with Indira Gandhi.

The third, Arjun Singh, has undergone three heart operations.

Favourite is P.V. Narasimha Rao, 70, who has been in poor health, but he has no power base and therefore least threatens other potential leaders.

"I haven't heard anything at all. If she (Sonia) refuses again... what do you want me to say? I don't deal in hypothetical situa-



Sonia Gandhi

tions," Rao told Reuters.

The main strike against Rao is that he is a southerner in a nation where the northern Hindi-speaking belt dominates parliament.

His main rival is Narain Dutt Tiwari from the key Uttar Pradesh state in the north, which has produced all but one of India's prime ministers.

But Tiwari is considered by the younger generation as a man with outdated ideas and other powerful regional bosses would be extremely reluctant to let him take over.

A dark horse compromise might be India's vice president Shankar Dayal Sharma, who is respected by the rank and file of the party, but may have difficulty finding support from the leadership.

The choice is expected to be made in consultation with Sonia Gandhi, Congress sources said.

The compromise being attempted involves her becoming party leader with members of parliament electing a leader after the elections who would become prime minister if Congress was in

a position to form a government. Meanwhile investigators still have open minds on the identity and allegiance of the woman suicide bomber who killed Gandhi, police and intelligence sources said Saturday.

After Gandhi was blown up Tuesday as he arrived for an election campaign meeting in southern Tamil Nadu state, suspicion immediately focused on the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

The Sri Lankan guerrilla group is fighting for an independent homeland. It has strong support, and bases, in Tamil Nadu, home to 50 million Indian Tamils across the narrow strait from Sri Lanka.

But the sources said that while there were good reasons to suspect the LTTE, they were not ruling out the possibility that someone else wanted to kill Gandhi, who had many enemies.

Police sources said other groups, even a personal vendetta, were not being ruled out.

"The assassin could be an agent of any terrorist group inimical to the emergence of a powerful leader in India. The terrorist group could be either Indian or foreign," said an intelligence source.

LTTE spokesman Anton Raja, in a telephone interview from his London base, denied the organisation was involved.

"It is certainly not the LTTE and we wish to say this categorically," he said.

Suspicion focused on the LTTE because Gandhi was killed in Tamil Nadu.

He sent more than 50,000 Indian soldiers to enforce a peace accord between the LTTE and Colombo in 1987. It quickly collapsed and the Indians ended up fighting the LTTE before being withdrawn in 1990.

Arms reduction pact may be reached soon

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — The United States and the Soviet Union, at a meeting next week in Lisbon, may resolve their remaining differences concerning a treaty to cut non-nuclear forces in Europe, U.S. officials have said.

That, in turn, would remove a major roadblock to a long-postponed U.S.-Soviet summit meeting. But President George Bush still would want a separate treaty to cut long-range nuclear missiles finished before he agreed to see Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, the officials said.

The meeting in Lisbon will be held June 1 by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker and Soviet Foreign Minister Alexander Bessmertnykh.

Bush said Thursday that "there is some room for optimism on working out these remaining problems" on the conventional forces in Europe treaty and staging a summit meeting this summer.

The disagreements are over implementing the treaty, signed by 22 nations last November in Paris. It provides for the deepest reductions in weapons in history.

The main issue is whether Soviet naval infantry regiments and their 1,100 weapons are to be counted against limits established under the treaty.

Gorbachev sent Gen. Mikhail Moiseyev, chief of the Soviet General Staff, to Washington this week amid expectations that Moscow would abandon its attempt to exclude the troops and arms from treaty restrictions.

As it turned out, Moiseyev offered several concessions, U.S. officials said.

Among them was that the Soviets would provide the United States with an accounting of most of the thousands of tanks that were diverted east of the Ural Mountains — and thereby outside the scope of the treaty, the officials said.

Another was that the tanks, armoured personnel carriers and artillery pieces assigned to naval units would be counted against the total of deployed and stored weapons permitted under the treaty.

On the other hand, the naval regiments' weapons would remain on active duty, thereby exceeding regional limitations. To comply with the permissible overall total, fewer weapons would be stored, said the officials, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Moiseyev completed his talks here Wednesday and left Washington with the treaty "Not Done Yet," an official said. Asked what the next step would be, he said, "we're waiting for them to make the next move."

Alternatively, another U.S. official said, the United States might be willing to make a small change in the treaty to accept the Soviet proposal. However, this might be complicated legally as 22 nations are involved.

Baker will probably make a new effort to settle the remaining dispute over the landmark treaty reducing conventional forces in Europe when he meets his Soviet counterpart in Portugal next week, his spokeswoman said Friday.

Spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler also said Baker would meet next week with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's envoy Yevgeny Primakov, who will be in Washington for crucial talks on Moscow's economic reform efforts.

She noted that Bush and Baker had both reported that the talks made some gains, but stressed the dispute is "definitely not resolved."

Soviets troops attack Lithuanian border posts

LONDON (Agencies) — Soviet troops attacked and burned five border posts in Lithuania Friday night, a spokesman for the National Defence Department of Lithuania said in London.

"Five border posts were attacked and burned by paratroops and black berets," Roman Kinka, a department spokesman said Saturday.

Separatist Lithuania and Latvia reported similar attacks by "black beret" Soviet soldiers Thursday in a flare-up of tensions with the Kremlin.

Kinka said two of Friday's attacks took place on Lithuania's border with Latvia, adding that the troops appeared to have come from Riga. The other three attacks were along the border with Byelorussia.

Guards had been beaten in one of the incidents and a number had been injured, he said. He could give no details.

In two of Friday's attacks by Soviet troops, assailants were armed with automatic weapons and mortars, Lithuanian Radio, monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), said.

Lithuanian Vice-Premier Zigmas Vasilevicius had complained by telephone to Soviet Deputy Interior Minister Ivan Shilov, the broadcast said.

Shilov promised to investigate and said a special group from the Soviet Interior Ministry had gone to Riga.

Moscow Radio, monitored by the BBC, said the Latvian Supreme Council and council of ministers had discussed adopting emergency measures after Thursday's attacks.

Some of the measures might include border protection forces and training volunteers for self-defence detachments.

Meanwhile Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosian said Friday the French government supports the republic's drive for independence from Soviet rule.

"I received assurance that France supports the self-

determination of people," Ter-Petrosian told a news conference. "Given that the process toward independence is taking place conforming to the Soviet constitution, we can hope for this (French) support," he said.

Ter-Petrosian met with a number of French officials including President Francois Mitterrand and Foreign Minister Roland Dumas during a four-day visit to France. He said French leaders pledged "not to close their eyes" if the Soviet army resumed attacks against Armenians.

France was criticised by Armenians living here after Mitterrand expressed support for Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's reform efforts during a visit to Moscow earlier this month.

Mitterrand's visit came as Soviet troops and Azerbaijani riot police clashed with Armenians in villages along the border of Armenia and the neighbouring Republic of Azerbaijan.

The Kremlin said the operation was designed to disarm Armenian militant groups in the region to keep the peace. The Armenians claim the action is designed to punish the republic for its separatist actions.

Armenian authorities plan a referendum on independence Sept. 21. If it passes, the Soviet constitution allows for independence after a transition period of five years, although approval by the Soviet parliament is required, making ultimate self-government seem extremely difficult.

"These constitutional clauses sit well with Armenia — we need a period of five years to create the premises of a true independence," Ter-Petrosian said.

"Nothing will permit us to breach the framework of the law, unless attacks are launched against Armenia," he said. "If the legal route is viable, there is no reason to veer from it."

At the moment, the situation is calm in Armenia, Ter-Petrosian said.

Slovenian killed in clash with Yugoslav army

BELGRADE (R) — A Yugoslav army vehicle ran over and killed a Slovenian man during a confrontation sparked by the republic's partial mobilisation of its defence force and its plans to secede, a Slovenian official said.

Slovenian Defence Minister Janez Jansa said Jozef Simcik was killed Friday in Maribor, near the Austrian border.

"The first casualty in the confrontation between the Yugoslav Peoples' Army and the Slovenian Territorial Defence has fallen," he told a news conference in the Slovenian capital, Ljubljana.

In another incident Friday, the Yugoslav army, which opposes Slovenia's secession plans, seized and later released, a senior military commander in the Republic.

The army arrested Colonel Vladimir Milosevic commander of eastern Slovenia's part-time reservists, but released him after Slovenia cut power and communications to all army bases on its territory.

Commenting on the death of Simcik, the deputy armed forces commander of the Maribor re-

gion Col. Alojz Lipik, said the army regretted what he described as a "traffic accident."

Reporters in Maribor said 500 people had gathered in silent protest at the spot where Simcik, who had been protesting against the federal army action, died.

The federal army said it had arrested Milosevic because he was responsible for detaining two federal soldiers at a territorial defence training centre Thursday.

Slovenia, which borders Italy, Austria and Hungary, has gradually upgraded its home guard into a Slovenian army, bringing it into direct conflict with the federal army.

The Republic's leaders say they will proclaim independence in June and have accused the army of stirring up trouble to destabilise Slovenia ahead of their planned secession.

The military wants Yugoslavia to remain a centralised federation. Disputes between the Republics have left the country without a president and the army without a commander-in-chief for more than a week.

Polish government wins confidence vote after protest

WARSAW (R) — By soundly defeating a vote of no confidence in Parliament, the Polish government has beaten back the most serious challenge yet to its tough austerity policies.

Parliament rejected by 188 votes to 54 Friday a farm deputies' motion accusing the Solidarity government of wrecking the economy and calling for its dismissal.

It was the first no-confidence motion put forward against a Solidarity government.

The government's clear-cut victory, however, was little cause for celebration in a week when opposition to its programme rose to a new crescendo and thousands of Solidarity workers took to the streets in protest.

"Someone suggested a 'cricket,' a Defence Minister said in London Friday. British provided bats, stumps and the players to skid too much on stretch of North Polar won was classified in although Royal Navy leaked word it was the

But the court's decision was a "dramatic sign that the supreme court cannot be counted on" to uphold its 1973 Roe vs. Wade decision that said women have a constitutional right to abortion, said Marcia Greenberger, managing attorney at the National Women's Law Centre.

"That means Congress has to step into the breach and enact the protections of Roe vs. Wade into law," she said. "American women have no place to turn but the political arena."

But that makes the ACLU's move uncomfortable about the future.

"It seems to me that on the issues... we have majority support in Congress, whether it's civil rights restoration or overturning the gag rule," she said.

"But congressional politics are not always played out on the issues," she said. "Issues are played against one another, so even when you have majority support, it doesn't guarantee you'll win."

11 killed as S. African peace conference enters final day

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — Politicians and academics gathered Saturday for the final day of the government's controversial summit on political violence, after a night of attacks killed 11 people.

The meeting took on an angry tone early Saturday when delegates from the Inkatha Freedom Party denounced the idea of a follow-up summit convened by church leaders.

Inkatha's rival, the African National Congress, is boycotting the conference but has expressed support for a church-convened meeting.

Delegate W.S. Felgate, an Inkatha leader, charged that "the church is part of the problem," an apparent reference to the South African Council of Churches, a close ally of the ANC.

Felgate was pushing for the summit to establish its own committee to follow up on decisions. Inkatha leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi proposed such a com-

mittee when the conference opened Friday.

President F.W. De Klerk urged the 200 or so delegates from the start to avoid policies and focus on solutions to soaring violence in black townships, but many opening speeches were marked by criticism of the absent ANC.

Buthelezi accused the ANC and its leader, Nelson Mandela, of "killing talk." Zulu leader King Goodwill, a close Buthelezi ally, said the ANC had unfairly accused Zulu-dominated Inkatha of instigating violence.

He warned that if the Zulus really wanted to crush the ANC, "that organisation would not last for long."

Brian Currin of the anti-apartheid group lawyers for human rights said later the morning session was counterproductive because of the critical comments.

Currin, one of the delegates, was laughed at when he went to the podium and suggested a peacekeeping force to keep violence under control.

The ANC, the main black opposition group, boycotted the conference, saying the government is a party to political violence and not in position to lead a summit on ending it. The ANC also was angry about not being consulted before De Klerk announced plans for the conference. Most black groups followed the ANC's lead.

Church leaders from the influential South African Council of Churches also skipped the summit, saying it would not be effective without the ANC.

As the talks were under way, the death toll in black townships rose. Police said 11 people died in overnight attacks in Soweto, outside Johannesburg. The government declared two more townships — Sebokeng and Evaton south of Johannesburg — unrest areas because of violence.

This gave police wider powers of arrest and placed residents under night curfews.

State radio said violent clashes also took place in Pusan, the country's second largest city and major port, Taegu, Ulsan and other areas as thousands of students and dissidents denounced President Roh Tae-Woo.

In the southwestern city of Kwangju, more than 50,000 mourners, chanting anti-government slogans to the sound of traditional gongs and drums, took part in mass funeral rites for a student protest suicide.

Newspapers said 42,000 riot police were deployed nationwide, half of them in Seoul.

Protests have shaken South Korea since April 26 when police fatally beat 22-year-old student Kang Kyung-Dae during a protest in Seoul. The weeks of demonstrations plunged the government into crisis and forced Roh this week to replace his premier.

The new prime minister, conservative educator Chung Won-Shik, arrived in Seoul Saturday evening from an African tour.

Student dies in Seoul protest

SEOUL (R) — A woman student died in a street battle between police and protesters in the South Korean capital Saturday as anti-government violence erupted across the nation.

Kim Kwi-Jong, a 25-year-old third year student at Seoul's Sungkyunkwan University, was killed as police tear-gassed a group of protesters near the city centre.

The cause of her death was not immediately clear. Witnesses quoted by Seoul media said she was apparently trampled underfoot as crowds fled a police charge.

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Strong quake shakes Peruvian town

LIMA (R) — A strong earthquake shook the city of Tacna in southern Peru near the border with Chile sending hundreds of residents fleeing into the streets, police said.

The earthquake registered six on the Richter scale, a spokesman at Peru's Geophysical Institute said Friday. It hit at 3:51 p.m. (2051 GMT), with an epicentre 250 kilometre from Tacna near the Pacific Ocean, the spokesman said.

"Some adobe walls have collapsed but we have no reports of

injured, a policy official told Reuters from Tacna, which is 1,300 kilometres from Lima.

"Hundreds of people fled to the streets in panic because it was felt very strongly," the official said.

A spokesman for the U.S. Geological Survey's National Earthquake Information Centre in Golden, Colorado, which also monitored the quake, said it hit 6.3 on the Richter scale.

The U.S. spokesman said there were reports the quake was felt in La Paz, Bolivia.

About 190,000 people live in Tacna, a thriving city near the Chilean border. The quake also affected part of Southern Peru, where most of the copper mining industry is located.

There were no immediate reports about damage at the Southern Peru Copper Corporation's major mines at Cuajone and Toquepala, or at its smelter at Ilo.

An earthquake registering 6.2 on the Richter scale hit Peru's Amazon region in the north-west in April, killing 58 people and injuring 252.

British interest in German tanks revives memories of Afrika Korps

BONN (AP) — Erwin Rommel's ghost is probably wearing a big grin. Bernard Montgomery, the British general whose tanks stopped the "desert fox" in El Alamein during World War II, may be spinning in his grave.

Nearly 50 years after the German general's defeat in the sands of North Africa, Britain is thinking about leasing 130 German Leopard tanks until it finds a

permanent replacement for its aging Chieftains.

Germany's defence minister, Gerhard Stoltenberg, said Friday "the question has been posed, whether they (the British) could temporarily use Leopard 2 tanks from German supplies. "So far there have only been low-level contacts between the countries on the subject, he added.

After the Gulf war proved a good tank remains a key battle-

field asset, Britain is pondering how to replace its fleet of nearly 30-year-old Chieftains. Britain also has the more modern Challenger 1 and Challenger 2 tanks.

Among tanks in the running to replace the Chieftain are the Challenger 2, which is made by the British company Vickers, and the U.S.-made M1A2 Abrams.

Another contender is Germany's Leopard 2, considered by many experts to be equal to the Abrams if not superior. Stoltenberg said Friday that using the German tank in Britain "only makes sense if the Leopard 2 is introduced there permanently."

Whoever wins the contract, the issue has already stirred up memories in both Germany and Britain of Rommel's epic battles with Montgomery, popularly known as "Monty."

The German newspaper Die Welt said that using German tanks in Britain's army "would certainly not go down well with Monty's heirs."

The independent, a British daily, agreed, saying: "The idea of British soldiers driving German tanks is a little hard for the (British) army to swallow."

"Political and emotional factors have weighed heavily against choosing a German tank as the permanent Chieftain replacement," the Independent added Thursday.

Rommel and Montgomery became legendary figures during World War II. In the spring of 1942, Rommel's Afrika Korps rolled across North Africa and engaged in fierce desert tank battles with the British, who retreated to El Alamein in Egypt.

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